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EVENTS OF THE WEEK

LORD CECIL'S resignation is a far more noteworthy affair than the mere loss to the Cabinet of one of its ablest and most respected members. It is an event of first-rate importance. Lord Cecil hints, in his letter to Mr. Baldwin, that he proposes to devote himself to the task of rousing public opinion on the issue of disarmament. And his power to make himself heard by the British public is sufficiently great to ensure that this issue will now become one of the principal themes of public discussion. Lord Cecil has, we think, timed his resignation well. He has waited until every chance has been explored of making progress within the limits of the ideas which commend themselves to our own and other Governments. The failure of the Coolidge Conference has made it clear

that we shall not make progress within these limits; and that we need a new impulse from "an aroused and instructed public opinion" which rates the importance of agreed limitation higher than do our present Ministers. The step which Lord Cecil has taken gives grounds for hope that that new impulse may be supplied.

* * *

If, however, we are to do our best to mobilize an effective public opinion, in real earnest about Disarmament, it will be well to avoid raising issues which must distract and paralyze it. We observe, with some disquiet, a re-emergence of propaganda in favour of the Protocol of 1924. Professor Noel Baker, for example, whose name deservedly carries weight in League circles, urges a return to the paths of the Protocol in a letter to the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN this week, arguing that the failure of the Disarmament negotiations shows the necessity of providing for security by comprehensive mutual guarantees. We agree with the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN in disputing this diagnosis and in deprecating the advocacy of such a policy. It is one thing to be willing ourselves to submit our own disputes to arbitration; and we wish that our present Government had not set such a bad example to the world by its hard refusal to enter into any undertakings of the kind. But it is quite another thing to undertake to go to war with any other State which refuses arbitration or violates an arbitral award. And that—so far as Great Britain was concerned—was the essence of the Protocol. It would have bound us incidentally to go to war with the United States, if she became involved in a dispute with any South American Republic, and refused to accept the arbitration of the League. We do not think that we ought to accept such obligations; and we are very sure that British opinion will not contemplate accepting them. The obligations of the Locarno Treaties, limited as they are to the case of a direct conflict between France and Germany, represent the utmost limits to which we shall go, at this stage of the world's history, in the direction of binding military guarantees. No good purpose can be served by encouraging anyone on the Continent to suppose that we may go beyond them.

* * *

Though, by common admission, Mr. Baldwin is not strong in Parliamentary debating-power, he is a master of urbane repartee, with a literary flavour; and the speech which he delivered in Scotland last week, on his return from Canada, contained a good example of his gift. He took up a common cliché of extremists, used recently by Mr. Maxton in the phrase, "Better some months of turmoil than a century of degradation."

"I do not know," retorted Mr. Baldwin, "the two things necessarily need be contrasted. I think they go together. Turmoil is a mild and polite word with a not

wholly disagreeable sound, but in this context it is used to conceal facts and not to reveal them. In plain English, *turmoil* means chaos, war, bloodshed, and the murder of the innocent."

This was a prelude to another of Mr. Baldwin's appeals for good relations between employers and employed. He stressed the fundamental character of the changes coming over our economic life, and the necessity of adapting ourselves to new conditions—themes which have been developed persistently in *THE NATION*. He rightly held these changes responsible in a large degree for the industrial troubles of recent years; and paid a tribute to the "statesmanship" which the trade-union leaders, other than the miners, had displayed in trying times. He then made an appeal to the Trades Union Congress to "give a lead" in the direction of peace and co-operation; and he concluded on the note:—

"The pains of new-birth, the transition to a fresh equilibrium, can be greatly mitigated for all parties and for the country, if we confront them, not as foes, but as friends."

* * *

This is true and important, as true and important as it was when Mr. Baldwin made his famous series of speeches in the spring of 1925. Unfortunately, the events which have since transpired have weakened the moral effect of mere words from Mr. Baldwin. It would be more to the purpose to-day to know whether the Government is preparing itself to play its part in "meeting changing conditions to-day as past generations did in their time." We take one question which seems to us to supply an acid test—the problem of the quarter of a million of miners whom the coal-mines are never likely to employ again. This is clearly not a problem which will solve itself without fearful misery and waste of human faculty. It calls, as clearly as the demobilization of an army after a war, for systematic planning and organized effort. How much longer will the Government continue to let this question drift? An imaginative, constructive handling of it might make a world of difference to the cause of good relations between employers and employed. The coal-mines are, as they have been for many years, the storm-centre of the industrial world; and it is idle to expect from the miners any other disposition than one of deep and bitter resentment against their employers, against the Government, against the social order, if those displaced from the industry, in numbers swollen by the return to the Eight Hour day, are left to sink or swim as best they may.

* * *

The rebate scheme announced by the British steel manufacturers is a very interesting development. The steel-makers offer their home customers substantial rebates on the purchase-price of steel, to be refunded periodically subject to the condition that the purchasers have not within the defined period bought any steel from any producer who is not a party to the scheme. The scheme is put forward as an attempt to fight the competition of foreign steel producers, who are supplying a rapidly increasing proportion of the British demand. And it is accompanied by a letter to the Press, surveying the growth of steel imports, the difficulties of competing with lower costs of production abroad, and the failure of the attempts of the steel trade to obtain Safeguarding duties. The present scheme has, however, little family resemblance to Protection. Essentially, it represents an attempt to compete with Continental producers by lowering the price of British steel, not by insisting on an artificial increase in the price of foreign steel. The reduction is, indeed, limited to those customers who purchase no foreign steel at all. But this is not necessarily objectionable,

The TIMES speaks of consumers of heavy steel in this country

"placing the cream of their orders—the large specifications of easily manufactured material—with foreign makers, while giving to British manufacturers merely the more difficult and costly specifications."

The rebate scheme is, in principle, a perfectly legitimate defence against this procedure. The operation of the scheme in practice will be watched with interest. We agree, however, with *the TIMES* that such measures will not suffice to secure the regeneration of the British steel industry; that its condition calls for measures of "unification," the need of which it is, like some other British industries, very slow to recognize.

* * *

Having won the two pending by-elections by substantial majorities, Mr. Cosgrave obtained a majority of one in the Dail, independent of Mr. Jinks, and at once advised the Governor-General to dissolve Parliament. He is calculating, no doubt, that a lightning campaign will work out to the advantage of the Government, and apart from this Mr. De Valera's recent speeches have played right into his hands. *Fianna Fail* are now officially committed to a programme involving demands for the abolition of the oath and the reopening of the financial settlement with Great Britain. Mr. Cosgrave is thus enabled to put the Coercion Bill in the background and go to the country on a straight issue of maintenance of the Treaty. He will thus make a strong appeal to the great mass of electors whose main concern is peace and stability, and it is probable that many people who were willing to vote for a non-juring *Fianna Fail* candidate, by way of registering a protest against unpopular Government measures, will think twice before actually sending to the Dail a member pledged to upset the settlement with Great Britain. Apart from the oath, Mr. De Valera's chief bid for support is a programme of protection so extreme that it must end by cutting off the Irish farmer from his best markets. Anything may happen at an Irish election under P.R., but the most probable result seems to be a victory for the Government and a partial squeezing out of the minor parties.

* * *

Lord Irwin's speech to the combined Legislatures of India leaves no doubt about the seriousness of the Hindu-Moslem strife in India. In the last eighteen months between 250 and 300 Indians have been killed and 2,500 injured. The loss of property caused by sacking and burning has, we suppose, been proportionately severe. The immediate outcome of the speech has been that the leading Moslem and Hindu members of the Legislatures have met in council. So far Lord Irwin's appeal has been successful. The difficulties of reaching a settlement by such means are, none the less, very great. The villagers who fight together are exasperated against each other by private enmities, and group feuds of every variety; and the Moslem and Hindu headmen, who lead and direct the riots, will be little inclined to resign their hopes of vengeance against an enemy because the magnates in a distant Legislature have come to an agreement. None the less, something may be done by an agreement in the Indian Legislatures; the Moslem population seem to fear that they will be deprived of a good many of their community rights, when, by the growth of representative institutions, they become little more than an outvoted minority. The peculiar rights and privileges which they feel to be endangered might possibly be secured by a political agreement in the Legislature.

* * *

The most pointed practical commentary upon Lord Irwin's appeal may be found in the Bengal Ministerial

crisis. Since the beginning of his Governorship Sir Stanley Jackson has had the aid of a joint Hindu-Moslem Ministry, which has just come to a violent end. In regard to personnel it was a poor compromise, and it has fallen partly because neither of the two Ministers has any public backing, partly because the Hindu, Mr. B. Chakravarty, was involved in grave discredit through the collapse of the Bengal National Bank. Sir Stanley Jackson invited co-operation from the Swarajist leader, Mr. Sen-Gupta, and the head of the military Moslem party, Sir Abdur Rahim. The former declined: his party refuses to accept responsibility. Sir Abdur Rahim, on the other hand, takes so emphatic an anti-Hindu line that there is no possibility of his finding a Ministerial colleague. The result is that the diarchal system is automatically suspended and the Executive resumes charge of all departments. It is in the face of a situation such as this that the chief Swarajist organ informs Lord Irwin that an outside authority must not try to bring peace between the two warring communities. The Viceroy may not; the Indian leaders confessedly cannot. What then?

* * *

It is not often that the Government of India is brought up against a difficulty in economic policy so sharp as that created by the Bombay millowners in connection with the new tariff proposals for the protection of the cotton industry. Two Bills have recently come before the All-India Legislative Assembly. The first provides for the application of the special tariff to imports of yarn, for safeguarding purposes; the second, for the removal of all import duties on mill machinery and stores and for facilitating imports of artificial silk yarn. Sir George Rainy, the Member for Commerce, discovered that the Government could expect little support in the Assembly, especially for the yarn Bill. A good deal of resentment had been caused among the elected members on account of the Government's having departed from its established rule in receiving a deputation from the Bombay millowners while the measures were being framed. They are not designed, said one Indian member, for the protection of the Indian textile industry, but rather for the special assistance of the Bombay firms, which, having taken every possible advantage of the boom conditions, were now finding themselves increasingly helpless against competition from the Far East. Japan is buying yarn in India and then dumping the finished goods upon the Indian market at prices which, it is said, are lower than the Indian costs. Japan appears to be taking the interesting line of making overtures towards the reform of her bad labour conditions, provided that the tariff Bills are dropped. Should they be passed, there may be retaliation in the shape of duties upon Indian pig-iron. Meanwhile, the Government of India is being made to realize that the protection of cotton is at least as ticklish as the protection of steel.

* * *

Not the least interesting aspect of Lord Cecil's resignation is its effect upon American opinion concerning the Geneva Naval Conference and the eagerly debated question as to the degree of responsibility for its failure resting upon the British and American Governments respectively. Lord Cecil is one of the very few English public men who are widely known in America and definitely associated in the popular mind with a policy and a cause. The American public has learned to associate him with the principle of Disarmament, and it is therefore perfectly natural that the American Press should interpret his departure from the Cabinet as a definite proof that Mr. Bridgeman and the Admiralty were standing at the Conference for an im-

possible demand. Lord Cecil, they will argue, virtually says so, and Mr. Baldwin has no answer to the clearly implied charge. In the meantime, it is intimated from Washington that Mr. Coolidge does not lose heart, is awaiting his opportunity, and will move again if he should see a likely opening. The answer to this forecast is that the President could not if he would make any further effort. The governing group in the Republican Party will act in strict regard to the electoral situation of 1928, and, whether Mr. Coolidge is to be a candidate or not, he will not attempt anything further in the direction of Disarmament during the next twelve months.

* * *

There are for the moment no sure indications of the effect that Zaghlul's death will produce upon the Wafd. There was a party meeting in Cairo on August 27th; but so many senators and deputies were away on their holidays that the meeting adjourned without coming to any decision of importance. Falhallah Barakat, Zaghlul's nephew, was mentioned as a possible leader, but that was all. The Egyptian Press, as far as can be judged, doubts whether the Wafd can possibly maintain its unity. One thing, however, is certain. Grievances on the question of the reserved points in the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of settlement have enormously assisted in keeping the party together. They were at once a bond of union, and an exercise in parliamentary declamation for the younger and ambitious members of the party. Nothing has as yet been divulged about Sarwat Pasha's conversations with Sir Austen Chamberlain; if he returns to Egypt with any sort of concession, and there is room for concessions on certain questions of detail, he will find it much easier to make treaties of alliance with certain sections of a disrupted Wafd.

* * *

Some sections of the French Press have contrived, very ingeniously, to mix up recent discussions between the Belgian and German Governments with the Rhine-land negotiation, although it is clear that they had nothing to do with it. The facts are these. The municipality at Dinant recently put up a war memorial which commemorates the civilians who were shot by order of the German authorities in 1914. The German Press loudly complained that the memorial was an incentive to international discord. How the German Government got involved is not quite clear; but they appear to have given M. Vandervelde an opportunity of dealing with the question officially. Acting without consultation with his colleagues, he invited the German Government to send German representatives to a Belgo-German Commission of Inquiry upon Belgian *franc-tireurs* and German execution squads. The German authorities replied that they would be most willing to send representatives to a mixed Commission for inquiring into all war responsibilities, including responsibility for the violation of Belgian neutrality. It is, of course, quite obvious that to answer in this way was to decline M. Vandervelde's invitation. German drumhead courts-martial have nothing to do with German pre-war policy. The German Government, or their diplomatic representative at Brussels, were very foolish to involve themselves in such a question.

* * *

Those interested in the Liberal Summer School, and especially those who were present at the Cambridge School this summer, will be interested to learn that reports of the addresses delivered at Cambridge will be published in the September issue of the FORWARD VIEW (price 3d.) which will shortly appear.

LORD CECIL'S CRUSADE

LORD CECIL has done well, we think, to leave the Cabinet, in which he has occupied for nearly three years a most peculiar position. Formally, his rôle has been to represent the British Government at the League of Nations; in reality it has been rather to represent the League of Nations within the British Government. He has been in the Cabinet, but not of it; and his anomalous detachment has been recognized by public opinion. Just as no one would have thought of holding Lord Kitchener responsible in the early days of the war for the political acts of the Government of which he was a member—such as putting Home Rule upon the Statute Book—so no one, however angry with the present Government for, say, its handling of the coal dispute or even for its measures of foreign policy, has ever borne a grudge against Lord Cecil. Throughout all the controversies of the past few years and all the vicissitudes of Ministerial reputations, the impression of Lord Cecil in the public mind has remained fixed and definite as, perhaps, the foremost protagonist in the world of the League idea.

But this has only been possible because everyone has felt that Lord Cecil's influence on the policy of the Cabinet has been very small. And for some time past it has been doubtful whether his presence there was serving any really useful purpose. Sir Austen Chamberlain is, according to his lights, a believer in the League of Nations. But his lights are very different from Lord Cecil's lights, and he feels in no need whatever of illumination from Lord Cecil. On the contrary, Sir Austen is supremely confident that he knows exactly how the League should be treated. The child should be brought up kindly but firmly by its parents, the Great Powers; it must learn to speak only when spoken to; from time to time a good snubbing should be administered, and any disrespect for parental authority must be sternly repressed. Sir Austen Chamberlain is a consciously dutiful parent; he is sincerely concerned for the child's welfare; but, as a father of the old school, he has no sympathy with these modern ideas of allowing the young more freedom and responsibility. When, accordingly, an idealistic maiden aunt, like Lord Cecil, talks to him in this strain, pointing out that, after all, the child is now growing up, and urging that there is often a greater wisdom in the fresh, generous impulses of youth than in the experience of crabb'd age, the effect on Sir Austen is merely irritating; the aunt's intervention may even lead to the young man being kept more firmly than ever in his place. It was evident at the time to the discerning that Lord Cecil was the target of some of Sir Austen's recent homilies on the undesirability of encouraging the League to meddle in the work of the diplomatists. Perhaps Sir Austen would have been less anxious to snub the League, if he had not been irritated by Lord Cecil in the Cabinet.

We may suspect that a similar fate has attended Lord Cecil's efforts to influence his colleagues as a whole on the issue of Disarmament. "I cannot conceal from

myself," he writes in his letter of resignation, "that on the broad policy of Disarmament the majority of the Cabinet and I are not really agreed." To Lord Cecil this issue is vital.

"I believe," he writes, "that a general reduction and limitation of armaments is essential to the peace of the world, and on that peace depends not only the existence of the British Empire, but even that of European civilization itself. It follows that I regard the limitation of armaments as by far the most important public question of the day. Further, I am convinced that no considerable limitation of armaments can be obtained except by international agreement. On the attainment of such an agreement, therefore, in my judgment, the chief energies of the Government ought to be concentrated."

It is easy to understand that such views would produce much the same negative impression on Lord Cecil's more sceptical colleagues as would the exhortations of a parson on a gang of racing roughs; and it seems not unlikely that they may have served to create prejudice for all suggestions emanating from him as to the desirability of making this or that concession in Disarmament Conferences. At any rate, at the League's Preparatory Commission in the spring, Lord Cecil found himself bound by his instructions "to maintain propositions in the Commission which were difficult to reconcile with any serious desire for the success of its labours." He was equally "out of sympathy" with the instructions he received at the recent Three Powers Conference. He suggests that these instructions made the difference between success and failure, and he adds that "the causes of that failure may have to be probed when Parliament meets."

If Lord Cecil was doing little or no good within the Cabinet, there is no doubt that he can render incomparable service outside.

"The hope of the future," so he concludes his letter, "lies in an aroused and instructed public opinion. That is an object which may employ all, or more than all, the energies which remain to me."

Lord Cecil, then, means to devote himself to the task of arousing and instructing public opinion. There is no more important task; and there is no man better fitted to discharge it than Lord Cecil.

Just reflect on the spectacle presented by Europe to-day. A Continent, little larger than the United States of America, cut up into about a score of sovereign States, some of them admittedly small States, others posturing as Great Powers, and tremendously concerned with their *status* and prestige. Throughout the greater part of this Continent there prevails, in all essentials, a common civilization. The peoples are so knit together in all the matters with which Governments do not concern themselves that the women of Europe shorten their dresses by the same number of inches at the same time. But State separatism is strong enough to frustrate the possibilities of material well-being which modern technical conditions open out. Tariff barriers check the growth of trade across frontiers; while the markets represented by the existing national areas—even of the Great Powers—have become as inadequate for the potentialities of large-scale industry as are our municipal areas for an efficient system of electric power. Yet,

though this disadvantage falls most heavily on the smaller States, the Great Powers so menace one another with vast armies and navies which drain away a large part of their productive powers and plunge them periodically into fearful conflict, that the inhabitants of the small States are the more fortunate, on the whole, unless indeed they happen to lie in the Great Powers' way. If we could only see this spectacle afresh, as for the first time, if our imagination was not dulled by its familiarity, surely we must account it an intolerable absurdity. The pretensions of these Great Powers! Why, many of them, when their currencies go astray, are incapable of putting matters right without the help of foreign loans!

Of this vicious and preposterous system, the armaments which the Great Powers maintain are by far the most vicious and preposterous feature. In the long run it is no more compatible with peace that these European States, which jostle one another so closely, should maintain armaments on such a scale as to be a constant deadly menace to one another, than it is compatible with the civil order of a town that its inhabitants should go about armed to the teeth. Assuredly, Lord Cecil does not exaggerate in his estimate of the supreme importance of armament limitation. And if we are to make real progress, public opinion must realize its importance—not merely in a vague, formal way, but with the vivid imaginative sense that gives a conviction the life which enables it to shape policy. Lord Cecil's reputation, experience, and position endow him with a unique power of appealing, not to his own countrymen alone, but to the public opinion of the world. We hail his decision to leave the Cabinet, and to lead a crusade on this most vital issue, with thankfulness and hope.

STRACHEY OF THE "SPECTATOR"

"THE pivot of my life has been the *SPECTATOR*." So, in his autobiography, declared the remarkable publicist who died in London on August 26th. If St. Loe Strachey was not what is meant by a great editor, he was at any rate an able, thorough, and distinctive one, and there is hardly a journalist in England with the personal memories of middle age who would omit his name from a list of the half-dozen most important editors of the period between the second Victorian Jubilee and the Great War. His connection with the *SPECTATOR* covered exactly forty years; he was editor and proprietor for close upon thirty. That is an unusual record; St. Loe Strachey was a very unusual man, and it is not unlikely that everyone who at any time worked with or near him must have had an impulse to write about him.

Nothing could have been more completely English, of the purely traditional governing-class kind, than the origins of John St. Loe Strachey. He liked to start the Somerset Stracheys from a friend of Ben Jonson's, and to connect their political fortunes with Clive. For many generations they were found in the public services, and two uncles, John and Richard, shared between them about half the highest offices in India. There was nothing in St. Loe Strachey that was not English and of his class; and yet it is true that he was strikingly unlike the popular conception

of the type—except in one particular, the perfect conviction of his own rightness. In physique he was slight and wiry. He dressed with just a touch of eccentricity. His look, with the dominant nose, was that of an osprey. He was extraordinarily full of vitality—invariably active, interested, and cordial.

After a boyhood that he loved to recall as gloriously happy, he went up to Oxford, and to Balliol, without having experienced the discipline, and the warping, of a public school. According to his own account, he was impenetrable to Greek and Latin. Jowett snubbed him, and he tells us cheerfully that the Dons found him insufferable. In English literature he had read enormously. He knew all the poets, and there was no Elizabethan dramatist whom he had not explored. Poetry of every kind he could recite at length and quote on all occasions. He had an astonishing faculty of appreciation; a way of spouting passages of verse or prose with gusto and proclaiming their merit in ringing terms. To the end of his days he quoted with unimpaired memory and with a bewildering catholicity. A rhapsody from Walt Whitman came as easily and confidently from his tongue as a string of couplets from Pope. He was, in short, a striking example of a free training in classical literature conferring the power to recognize and delight in almost any modern mode of expression.

Both in his professional and in his personal life St. Loe Strachey enjoyed the most signal good fortune. From end to end of his autobiography, "An Adventure in Living," there is no record of a reverse, and hardly the hint of a sorrow. It would, indeed, be difficult to think of a contemporary Englishman to whom the good things of life came more easily or in a more continuous stream. Fresh from Oxford he stepped into the office of the *SPECTATOR*. His second leading article was quoted by a Cabinet Minister. The ownership of the paper fell to him along with the editorship. He concerned himself with the management, and the circulation was immediately doubled. Political schisms and personal feuds which destroyed in turn the position and influence of nearly every powerful London editor of Strachey's generation turned, in singular fashion, to the advantage of the *SPECTATOR* and enhanced the prestige of its editor.

The paper was supposed to be the perfect organ of one of the closest and most peculiar communities in the world—that section of the upper-middle governing class which, with its tradition of liberal-conservative orthodoxy and tempered interest in things of the mind, sent its sons into the public services all through the Fortunate Age that came to an end in 1914. Such a journal, one would assume, could only be directed by an editor of the utmost caution and correctitude. Strachey knew his clientèle inside out, and he made a sufficient fortune out of it. But he was neither cautious nor correct. He possessed a vigorous minority mind, and was splendidly independent. He had many crotchetts, and for years he ran them hard, apparently without thought of their effect on his circulation. To the prejudices and the heroes of the Upper Middle he was, as often as not, energetically opposed. He had a noble hatred of slavery, and took an unwavering line over the black man in Africa. Convinced Imperialist as he was, he disliked and distrusted Cecil Rhodes and took a boyish delight in exposing his practices. When Joseph Chamberlain led the Conservative—or, as Strachey always called it, the Unionist—Party back to Protection, the *SPECTATOR* refused to budge. Its Free Trade articles were as clear and pungent as the best in the Liberal Press, and we have been assured that the paper's political influence was at its height during those years. The earlier Lloyd George was, of

course, entirely antipathetic to Strachey, and unlike the bulk of his readers, he never accepted him. On the Saturday following the overthrow of the Asquith Cabinet his opening comment took the form of a reprint, in the editorial notes, of Lincoln's immortal warning to General Hooker. From that day until the end of the Coalition in 1922 Strachey maintained his hostility, while on the Peace Treaties and their results he was hardly less outspoken than the then Editor of *THE NATION*.

Being on the Conservative side, his independence was as notable a phenomenon in England as Mr. Garvin's, and it was far more irritating to his party because so persistent and proclaimed with so pontifical an air of righteousness and authority. Nor can his crotchetts have been any less trying to the *SPECTATOR*'s old devotees than his larger political heresies. He preached with lone enthusiasm a project for national military service as a substitute for conscription. During the War he took up Prohibition as a war-winning measure, and rammed it down week after week. From first to last he insisted upon the complete forms of Democracy in Conservatism, and advocated the Referendum, to the disgust of a party that could not tolerate the idea—except for a few months when a poll of the people seemed to provide an open road to Protection. His absolute belief in his own schemes encouraged a habit of merciless reiteration which during his last decade came to be the special mark of St. Loe Strachey. With liturgical regularity he went on repeating the lesson of the hour, whatever it might be, while friendly critics marvelled at the patience of his public. It is understood to live in repetition, but only of those notions which it accepts as the body of truth. But after all, we should not forget, the *SPECTATOR* which Strachey inherited was a class institution. Until a dozen years ago the country houses and vicarages in which so large a part of its readers dwelt had never envisaged the possibility that England might change.

Strachey's political judgments were a very curious combination of generosity, perverseness, and consistency. While it was true that one could not be sure what stand he would take on any great controversial question, the line of his reasoning could generally be predicted. When he went to America, upon giving up his editorship, he described himself as a born Northerner, in the issue between the States. His knowledge of American history was hardly surpassed among English publicists. He cherished an immeasurable admiration for Lincoln, and he made the illuminating confession that it was based upon Lincoln's adherence to the Union, and not unrelated to his own unalterable belief in the union between England and Ireland. More than any other English editor Strachey laboured throughout the War on behalf of Anglo-American friendship. His tea-parties in Chester Square for that purpose were famous. But it was wholly characteristic that, when America was neutral, and Americans were resisting the British blockade, the *SPECTATOR* should have sent a shock through the great host of American friends of England by issuing a Stracheian declaration of war. Strachey was a deeply righteous Englishman. He always knew that he was right. It was not for nothing, as Mr. A. G. Gardiner gently pointed out, that the frontage of the little old office of the *SPECTATOR* at the Strand approach to Waterloo Bridge stood out with a special whiteness among its neighbours. His foibles were many, and there were colleagues and opponents who felt them to be annoying. But they were trifles, often very agreeably revealing the man. Today, as we think of his fine character and endowments, the Press of the English-speaking world pays tribute to an accomplished and valiant penman, and to an editor who in the essentials of his craft has left no superior.

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THE EIGHTH ASSEMBLY

GENEVA, AUGUST 26TH.

THE Assembly of 1927 will meet under discouraging conditions, and it is not agreeable for an Englishman to have to reflect that a principal cause of this discouragement is the policy of the present British Government. Sir Austen Chamberlain and the Foreign Office, no doubt, desire to preserve and perpetuate peace. They have made their contribution thereto by their support of the Locarno treaties; and if the promise of these is now wearing thin, that is due to French, not to British policy. But these treaties also throw into relief the fatal flaw in British policy. Belgium, France, and Germany agree to rule out war for ever among themselves. The British take no similar obligation. They promise only to support by arms any one of the trio which may be attacked by another. To make the paradox more striking, Great Britain, with the other members of the Council, has recommended to all Governments of the League a resolution expressing the hope that the principles of Locarno "will be recognized by all States and will be put into practice, as soon as possible, by all States in whose interest it is to contract such treaties." Among these States, it is clear, we do not include ourselves. We have refused on every possible occasion to bind ourselves not to go to war. We have rejected proposals in that sense made by even the smallest States; and we have not even adhered to the Optional Clause of the Statute of the International Court, whereby States contract to rule out war in the class of legal disputes. At every point, on every occasion, we have shown our determination not to abandon the ultimate right of war, while yet posturing before the world and ourselves as the most pacific of States. We may impose on ourselves. We may be sure that we impose on no one else.

As with arbitration, so with disarmament. We have nothing but sympathy for the limitation of armaments on land. We should like to see the submarine abolished. But limitation of armaments at sea we make conditional on the maintenance of our supremacy over all Powers, except the United States, with whom we have reluctantly conceded parity. But even here we have not succeeded in reaching an agreement, and the Coolidge conference has broken down. We need not attempt to apportion the blame between the two Admiralties. The principal moral is that, so long as disarmament is confided to soldiers, sailors, and airmen, it will never be achieved. Nor can they be blamed for that. It is their duty to prepare for war, and it is paradoxical to expect them to foster peace. But the Governments must be blamed who leave the issues in their hands; and the result, in this case, may be catastrophic. We say indeed, on both sides of the Atlantic, that war is "unthinkable." It would be truer to say that it will not be thought about, but only prepared for. The situation now begun with the United States is precisely parallel to that begun with Germany in 1900. Within fifteen years we were at war with her. *Absit omen!* But war will not be obviated by hiding our heads in the sand. And war with the United States would be something other than war with Germany. From the latter we emerged victorious. Does any admiral, in his heart of hearts, confidently expect the same result from a war with the United States?

These are the main points in the indictment against British policy. They may be supplemented by others less important but still significant. When we reproved the Mandates Commission for exceeding its province; when we proposed to limit the topics which the League should handle; the intentions may have been excellent, but the effect on British reputation was none the less unfortunate. Add to this the tendency of statesmen to neglect the

League's machinery and constitution and engage in secret bargaining outside it, and it will become clear why this country has come to be regarded as the torpedo numbing the hand that would fish up peace from the ocean.

This being the situation in which the Assembly will open, it is worth while to inquire what might even now be done to save the situation. And first, on the question which dominates all others, disarmament. There may perhaps be some plain speaking on this subject. And the British Government might do much to retrieve the situation if they would express, clearly and unmistakably, their determination to retrieve the failure of the Coolidge Conference. The League, of course, is not directly concerned with the Anglo-American rivalry; but its indirect concern is enormous, since it is preparing its own disarmament conference, and the failure of the one is likely to ensure the failure of the other. On the other hand, a clear statement by the British Government that they do not intend to acquiesce in the set-back they have experienced would do something to renew hope and confidence. Nor is it very difficult to sketch the policy that a British Government with courage and imagination might pursue. What the Americans are determined not to permit in future is interference by the British with American trade in defiance of American principles. We cannot insist, against their will, on applying our own sea-law to their detriment. If we try to do so, we shall be met with war. And, to put it brutally and realistically, we cannot afford war with the United States. The only alternative is to come to an agreement with them about sea-law. In a League war, recognized by them as such, they might agree to permit a more extensive blockade, and that is all that we can reasonably desire. In any case, an attempt on our part to dictate the law to them can only issue in disaster. Further, if we are sincere when we say war with them is "unthinkable," we should show our belief in a practical way by proposing to them an agreement on the lines of Locarno, ruling out war in every event. Whether they would agree it is not easy to forecast, but at least we should have taken the right step, and rallied to our side the mass of floating opinion in America which does really want to end war.

So far as disarmament is concerned, we cannot do more at the Assembly than make a gesture showing our determination to pursue the problem in a new and more radical way. But there is another question of the greatest importance to the prosperity and, ultimately, to the peace of Europe. One of the outstanding successes of the League was the recent Economic Conference. The resolutions there adopted showed the conviction of business men and economists that the high tariff systems now maintained, in a Europe politically disrupted, are a principal cause of poverty and distress. A strong lead from Great Britain endorsing the resolutions would assist the movement to give practical effect to them. We should have the support of other Continental Powers, particularly of Germany; and our own interests run so clearly in the same direction that mere common sense must urge us to throw our weight on that side. There may be members of the Cabinet who are protectionists, or who desire a self-contained British Empire; but even these could hardly oppose a reduction of European tariffs, from which British trade would necessarily benefit.

The Government then might, if it would, do something even now to mitigate the consequences of their previous record. If they do not take that course, so much the worse. There will be a set-back in the prestige and influence of the League. But it can hardly be more than a set-back. The present Government will not last for ever, and the Liberal and Labour Parties, whatever their differences in domestic policy, are agreed in their attitude to

foreign affairs. Through all the vicissitudes of national policy the League is gradually building up a record of good work which is not only making it indispensable in the financial and humanitarian reconstruction of the world, but is preparing the time when it can tackle effectively the problem of peace and war. Through good and ill report the permanent machinery of the League pursues its arduous and beneficent activities. What it requires, for the accomplishment of its task, is the steady and enlightened support of public opinion in all countries. That, again, presupposes a Press well informed and well disposed. On that, more than on anything else, the future may depend. The issue is doubtful. But internationalists have this great fact upon their side, that they are the realists while the war-men are the idealists. Without haste and without rest they will pursue their task of enlightenment. And the future is with them.

G. LOWES DICKINSON.

LIFE AND POLITICS

I do not remember any political secret that has been better kept than that of Lord Cecil's resignation. He wrote his decisive letter immediately on his return from the Geneva Conference, whose failure was the last drop in his cup of humiliation. It has long been suspected that his position in the Government was becoming untenable. It is well known that when Lord Cecil joined the Baldwin Cabinet he made one condition and one condition only—that the Government should work sincerely for a general and simultaneous reduction of armaments. Geneva meant to him the completion of his disillusionment with the vague and powerless good intentions of Mr. Baldwin. Like so many lesser men Lord Cecil believed that Mr. Baldwin, for whom he has a real friendship, used fine words as a preliminary to action. But it has all gone for nothing. Again and again this year, from one stage to another of the international struggle to get something done towards arbitration and disarmament, Lord Cecil has found his efforts sterilized by the cynical disbelief of his colleagues in the Cabinet. Reluctantly and slowly—for he is a man who reaches decisions through a painful balancing of considerations—he has been forced to the conclusion that he is helpless as a Minister to serve the cause for which alone he entered the Government. He was probably greatly influenced by the action of his friend M. de Jouvenel, but the chief causes that have determined him are written large in the speeches and actions of Sir Austen Chamberlain. The "meddlesome Matty" speech was an intolerable offence. Lord Cecil has striven for long to resist the conviction, which multitudes of friends of the League have been forced to accept, that the Baldwin Government has no real use for the League. The rest follows.

* * *

Lord Cecil will, I believe, carry most friends of the League with him in the step that he has taken. They feel as he does that there is nothing useful for him to do inside the Government now that its bankruptcy of ideal force has been shown so clearly in action. He resumes his former position as the leading unofficial protagonist of the League; a position of international importance. His "minute," which is surely almost unexampled in the severity of its terms (I am not surprised to hear that his colleagues spent anxious hours over it before allowing it to go forth), delivers a blow at the moral prestige of the Government. Mr. Baldwin is left solitary and quite helpless to resist with further fine sentiments the naked reaction at home and imperialism abroad. It is surely right that Lord Cecil should cease

by his presence to give to the Administration a completely delusive air of liberal idealism. I do not suppose that his going will be felt as a loss by the Tory Party. Lord Cecil has no following in the sense that interests the Tapers and Tadpoles; great as is his following in the world of thought and aspiration:—

... [he has] "great allies;
His friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind."

* * *

Within this last week the public has had the shock of realizing that slavery exists under the British flag. How difficult it is for the propaganda of humanitarians to make any impression outside a narrow circle. The agitation against the continuance of slave holding in the Protectorate of Sierra Leone has been carried on by the Anti-Slavery Society for a decade. Few people knew anything about it; indeed until last week the average person would have indignantly denied that there is slavery in the British Empire. Suddenly two judges, out of three, sitting in the Supreme Court of the Colony calmly declare that under the British law a runaway slave must be handed back to his owner. The shock is severe, but it is probably salutary. The affair may well create such general uneasiness that the Colonial Office will be strong enough to take the only possible line, and forthwith abolish slavery, root and branch, at once and for good, in the Sierra Leone Protectorate. Events have proved that compromise is impossible with an evil so vicious as slavery existing in a semi-barbarous dependency. The administrators thought that they had made a good job of it when they imposed, quite recently, very severe restrictions. So long as slavery is allowed to exist at all there will be abuses which the law, as we have just seen, may be forced to protect. It is certain that unless the home Government takes the bold course and buys the freedom of the existing slaves, it will be faced with a storm of indignation in the country and in Parliament. Unless something decisive is done quickly the storm will burst when the House of Commons reassembles.

* * *

When Sir William Joynson-Hicks got his way and the breach with Russia occurred, sensible people who had no Bolshevik axe to grind warned the Government of the consequences. They said that Russian trade would be diverted to our competitors, and that, of course, is what is happening, as every business man knows and deplores. Lost trade will not be conjured back by the inoperative goodwill of the last Baldwin speech. Mr. Baldwin might at least have a private word with his Home Secretary who is making things needlessly worse by turning out of the country Russian trade experts who are here for our good as well as their own. Jix's latest exploit is to dismiss two directors of Russian Oil Products, Limited, on his mere ukase, without a word of explanation, or even the formulation of any charge. He is alleged to be advised in dealing with aliens by a Committee, but its composition and authority are alike unknown. The position is that the Home Secretary exercises an arbitrary power in this matter. When he is challenged to give reasons he refuses to open his mouth. Some official apologist, who must be an amateur humorist, has suggested that this reticence is intended as a kindness. If the terrible truth was published the deported aliens would be prejudiced in other countries. This line of defence may prove that the Home Secretary is a kind-hearted man, at the expense of deepening the general opinion about the state of his head. It is really intolerable that an imitation Mussolini sitting in consultation with an imitation Star Chamber, should be allowed to put fresh obstacles in the way of trade relations with

Russia. On general principles of liberty even a Russian is entitled to be told why he is bundled out of the land that is ironically known as the haven of the exile.

* * *

Mr. Bonamy Dobrée must forgive me if I say that in his letter to THE NATION rebuking me for my note on the speaking of Shakespeare's purple passages he does not attack my point. He tells us that he greatly prefers the conversational or dramatic method in stage performances of speaking such passages as "The quality of mercy," &c. I was not discussing whether or no that method is preferable. I was raising the question rather as an interesting subject of inquiry, of how in fact such non-dramatic passages of philosophy or rhetoric were delivered on the stage of Shakespeare's day. Mr. Dobrée seems to ignore this matter. Surely the apron or platform stage of the Elizabethan stage was specially adapted for the declamation of the set speech, and until I am corrected by the production of definite contemporary evidence, I shall continue to believe that declamation or elocution was precisely what the dramatist intended. In a word, I must persist in holding that Hamlet's instruction to the players to speak his words "trippingly on the tongue" is not necessarily convincing proof that Shakespeare intended "the quality of mercy" speech (to accept that as the test case) to be spoken at the speed and in the manner natural to a *riposte* in conversation. My feeling is that the dramatic taste of the time was elastic enough to allow and provide for the occasional non-dramatic (and therefore in Mr. Dobrée's meaning), non-conversational delivery of set speeches. I would admit at once that the disuse of the apron stage makes a difference to the argument, but then my note began with a plea in support of Mr. Poel for an Elizabethan playhouse in London.

* * *

On Sunday night it was my privilege to spend a few minutes talking with two middle-aged business men from America who had just flown the Atlantic. They had come in the most casual way possible, their luggage consisting of some indifferent maps, tooth-brushes, and a bottle of aspirin. There was, of course, nothing casual about the machine, for experience has shown that the wonderful Wright whirlwind engine is the king of long-distance flying. What struck me as I chatted with these very ordinary, unassuming heroes, Brock and Schlee, was the bewildering speed with which the mind accustoms itself to marvels. The public seems only to be capable of excitement over the first performance of a feat. Only a few weeks ago London and the world generally were making life a burden with excessive hero-worship for Lindbergh, that knight-errant of the air. The attention given to Brock and Schlee was very moderate. People are already tired of reading about Atlantic flights. The two airmen themselves made nothing of their achievement, regarding the crossing of two thousand miles of ocean as no more than the first and by no means the most difficult stage in a great enterprise. The fact that it had been done already made all the difference, and in an incredibly short space of time glory had faded to routine. They knew, of course, that the most terrible threat to life will come much further on in the flight round the globe—on the trans-Pacific trip from Japan to Honolulu.

* * *

Why do people go to the Cinema? I have always wanted to know, and I therefore eagerly scanned some "publicity matter" sent to me which summarizes the results of a questionnaire. This seems to have been filled in by some thirty thousand cinema goers in London. The replies to the question, "What attracts you to the Cinema?" do not seem to have been very helpful. The

largest number of voters made answer, "The picture," which seems obvious. A somewhat smaller number of people go to see some particular "star," and quite a large percentage (this is surprising) to hear the orchestra. It seems that only a small percentage choose their cinema house because it is cheap ("Prices of admission—7½ per cent."), and it does not amaze me to learn that the smallest number of all are attracted by Publicity. It would need a Sinclair Lewis or a Mencken to do justice to the prose of the film advertisement men. It is written in a language that stuns rather than allures. On the other hand, it is gratifying to me as a journalist to hear that no less than 31 per cent. of the voters declare that they are influenced in choosing a film by the verdict of the film critics. About half the voters seem to visit the pictures regularly twice a week. To end where I began—on the whole people go to the pictures—to see the pictures. This "publicity matter" reminds me of the report of a Royal Commission.

KAPPA.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE RHINELAND QUESTION

SIR.—I entirely agree with your suggestion that there should be demilitarized zones on both sides of the Franco-German frontier, but in the present state of French feeling it would, I fear, be indignantly rejected by all parties in France, except the Communist Party, which does not count in such matters. Many Socialists would, no doubt, admit it to be just and reasonable, but few would probably have the courage to say so eight months before a general election, and some—M. Paul Boncour, for example—would regard such a suggestion with as much patriotic horror as would M. Poincaré or M. Painlevé or M. Herriot or M. Marin, between all of whom there is very little if any difference about foreign policy.

And I fear that a bilateral scheme of demilitarized zones would not diminish French apprehensions, since they are not diminished by the existence of a demilitarized zone on the German side of the frontier alone. On the contrary, the French Minister of War, M. Painlevé, who is merely a puppet of the General Staff, is now asking for credits to begin a vast system of fortifications on the new French frontier for the express purpose, as he himself has publicly said, of facilitating a French offensive in the German demilitarized zone, in which Germany is for ever forbidden to have a single soldier or any fortifications. Herr von Kardoff was violently attacked in France the other day for saying that the frontiers of Germany were exposed and defenceless, although—or perhaps because—it was a simple statement of fact. Yet it is against this exposed and unfortified frontier that the French Government and the French General Staff propose to build what they themselves declare to be fortifications for purely offensive purposes. If they do this, what chance is there of their agreeing to a demilitarized zone on the French side of the frontier? And what hope is there of Franco-German reconciliation so long as such a spirit as this exists in France, even on what is called the Left? For M. Painlevé belongs to the "Socialist-Republican" Party, supposed to be a little more to the Left than the Radicals—a sort of half-way house between Radicalism and Socialism.

The facts that I have mentioned do not invalidate your opinion that a satisfactory solution of the Rhineland question depends on a bilateral scheme of demilitarized zones. Far from that, they confirm it, for the present situation fully justifies apprehensions in Germany, especially after the recent remark of the *ECHO DE PARIS* (expressing the view of the French General Staff) that the great mistake in the Pact of Locarno was the limitation of British and Italian support of France to the case of an "unprovoked aggression" on the part of Germany. This, said that paper, might prevent France from making "preparations," no doubt of the nature of the secret mobilization of five classes of reservists on July 30th, 1914, of which M. Painlevé boasted in the Chamber some little time ago, adding that any French

Government would do the same again in similar circumstances.

In my opinion, there will never be any solution of the Rhineland question—except the French solution of remaining in the Rhineland for ever—unless and until England has a Foreign Secretary with the courage to speak plainly to France and insist on the fulfilment of the promises made before the signature of the Locarno Pacts. For the French refusal to evacuate the Rhineland is a breach of faith with England as well as with Germany—a repudiation of the conditions on which England gave her guarantee—and I shall continue to say so even if it now suits Sir Austen Chamberlain to deny the fact. When Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Curzon were in office, England counted on the Continent. At present the opinion of the British Government is regarded in France with complete indifference, and it is assumed as a matter of course that British lives will always be at the disposal of the French Government for any adventure into which French policy may drag France—and Europe. If we want peace, we must end the "Entente Cordiale" and make it clear that we will have no special and unilateral understanding with France or any other country. I believe that we are strong enough, if we will, to impose peace on Europe. If not, let us clear out of Europe altogether, for peace will never be secured in any other way.

Let there be no mistake about it. Dr. Stresemann's question has been answered. France has chosen the policy of the Ruhr—or of the Dariac Report.—Yours, &c.,

ROBERT DELL.

Paris, August 29th, 1927.

THE INTRANSIGENCE OF THE MINING ASSOCIATION

SIR.—I am writing, with Lord Londonderry's knowledge and approval, to challenge the statement in your issue of August 20th that "a settlement (of the coal dispute) could have been obtained after about three months on the sort of terms sketched out by the Samuel Commission; and that it was the owners who rejected every suggestion of compromise. . . ."

This statement is incorrect and mischievous. Let Sir Herbert Samuel himself bear witness. Writing in the *TIME*s on December 10th last year, of the efforts to end the strike in May, he said: "The Trade Union Council informed me that they had decided that they would no longer be bound by the miners' uncompromising policy." And later in the same communication, the ex-Chairman of the Royal Commission adds: "Every proposal made at that time met an equal fate. Each one in turn was wrecked by the veto of the miners' leaders." The *miners' leaders*, be it noted; not the coalowners.

Your note-writer should have refreshed his memory by reference to the newspaper file before committing you thus.

He is equally erroneous when he asserts that "the coal industry drifts from bad to worse." If he were engaged in the industry he would know that the position is improving, and that foreign markets, temporarily lost to us by reason of the strike, are gradually being won back. In the arduous work of winning back these markets he renders less than no service by lending his pen and the authority of your paper to statements which, more than any others, instil doubt into the minds of prospective foreign buyers.—Yours, &c.,

PHILIP GEE,

Director of Coalowners' Publicity Department.

August 26th, 1927.

[The extracts which Mr. Gee quotes from Sir Herbert Samuel's article are quite irrelevant to our contention. We asserted that, but for the intransigence of the owners, the coal dispute could have been settled *after about three months* (i.e., at the end of July or the beginning of August). Sir Herbert Samuel was writing, as Mr. Gee correctly records, of the situation "in May," at the time of the General Strike. We quite agree that "at that time" the miners' leaders were even more obdurate than the owners.

But what are the facts relevant to the possibilities "after about three months"? In the middle of July, the miners' executive accepted what was commonly known as the "Bishops' Plan"—a plan which, one material point apart,

contemplated a settlement on the lines of the Samuel Report. It proposed, indeed, that the Samuel Commission should be asked to work out in detail "the terms of the reorganization scheme and *the reference to wages in the Report*"; and it provided that, should agreement between the two sides still be impossible after this had been done, a Joint Board should appoint "an independent Chairman, whose award in settlement of these disagreements shall be accepted by both parties." The material point in which the plan did not conform to the Report was that it proposed that work should be resumed on the old wages and hours and the subsidy continued for four months, pending the final settlement. We do not wish to minimize the importance of this condition. It was a stiff condition; and was in any case a point, not for the owners, but for the Government, who declined it. Moreover, after the Government had declined it, the plan was rejected by the miners in one of those curious quasi-plebiscites with which the dispute was punctuated. None the less, the acceptance of this plan by the Federation executive was a remarkable step forward; and from this moment, we believe that, if the miners had been met by a conciliatory disposition on the owners' side, it would not have been impossible to arrive at a reasonable compromise.

Subsequent developments confirm this view. In any case, if we say "four months," instead of three, our contention is not open to reasonable doubt. In the middle of August, the miners' executive obtained from a delegate conference a free hand to negotiate a national settlement, without any other limitations than that the settlement must be of "a national character." They immediately sought a conference with the Mining Association, who slammed the door at once by declaring that the dispute could only be ended through the medium of district settlements. By the end of August the Federation had formally declared its readiness to "enter into negotiations on the question of wages," waiving by implication the demand for a temporary subsidy; and, a few days later, it produced a formula about "a reduction of labour costs to meet the immediate necessities of the industry," which, by covering longer hours, was acceptable to the Government. There followed an extraordinary episode. We have not forgotten, if Lord Londonderry and Mr. Gee have forgotten, that remarkable Conference at 10, Downing Street on September 6th, 1926, between Ministers and the leaders of the Mining Association, at which Mr. Churchill pleaded with Mr. Evan Williams to accept at least the semblance of a national settlement—pleaded and threatened, both in vain. We have the report of the proceedings before us as we write. We find Mr. Churchill arguing that the refusal of national negotiations will prolong the stoppage. We find Mr. Evan Williams replying that he does not think so, that the breakaway in the Midlands is most encouraging, and proceeding as follows:—

"I say that even if the refusal of the Mining Association were to prolong the strike—which I think is not going to be the case—it is in the interests of the country in the long run that it should get away from these national arrangements which have held the country to ransom over and over again, and will continue to do so so long as they exist."

We might multiply quotations. But we have quoted enough, surely, to establish the point that the Mining Association deliberately chose complete victory in a fight to a finish in preference to a relatively early compromise. They announced the fact plainly and proudly then. Why shuffle about it now? If, as we can well believe, we are still suffering in export markets from the cumulative effects of the extreme protractedness of the stoppage, Lord Londonderry cannot, in fairness, lay this at the miners' door.

As to Mr. Gee's other complaint, we must take leave to form our own impression of the general condition of the industry; but we may point, as among various relevant criteria, to the figures of the most recent district ascertainment, and to the weekly figures of production and employment.—ED., NATION.]

THE BALANCE OF TRADE

SIR.—Your correspondent, Mr. Schwartz, of the London School of Economics, points out that the imports for the first seven months of this year are eight millions higher than the first seven months of 1926, and says: "with the result

that the *adverse* visible balance of trade is actually five millions greater than last year."

In your note to the above letter, you say: "Exports are up by less than three millions, so that the balance of visible trade is actually *less favourable* than it was last year during a period which contained three months of coal stoppage. This is surely a very remarkable and a decidedly disquieting fact."

Here we have again the use of the words "adverse balance," because our visible imports are greater than our visible exports, and I suppose it is the use of that word "adverse" that causes you to say that it is "a decidedly disquieting fact."

Now you know and everybody knows, except the Protectionists, that the excess of imports over visible exports is the measure of our national prosperity. If our visible exports exceeded our visible imports we should soon be starved to death. To stigmatize an excess of imports over exports as an "adverse balance" is the sort of argument used by the Protectionists. I was told by a clever Protectionist fifty years ago that this country would soon be ruined on account of its excess of imports. He himself was firmly convinced of the truth of his argument, so are all the Protectionists firmly convinced that if the visible imports are greater than the visible exports we are on the road to ruin, and therefore they use the word "adverse" balance. But surely it is a mistake for a Free Trader to copy that word. The proper adjective is "profit" balance, and the fact that the "profit" balance has increased by five million pounds in the first seven months of 1927 is not a *disquieting* circumstance to a Free Trader, but should rather be put down as a *consoling* circumstance in the conditions to which you allude.—Yours, &c.,

ARNOLD LUPTON.

[This is an old point on which Mr. Lupton wrote and we replied in May. We repeat that we find the present abnormally large "adverse" balance of visible trade disquieting, because we fear that, if it continues, and if our public continues to lend abroad on even a very moderate scale, we may be confronted before long with an awkward situation as regards the balance of payments, which may entail a heavy outflow of gold and a serious derangement of our economic life.—ED., NATION.]

DRAMATIC UTTERANCE IN SHAKESPEARE

SIR.—I have so often remained silent under the literary and dramatic heresies of Kappa, that perhaps you will on this occasion allow a protest. In his note on Mr. Poel's views, he ventures to disagree with him on the question of dramatic utterance in Shakespeare's plays. Luckily for my purpose, he mentions "the quality of mercy" speech. I remember being present a couple of years ago at the Norwich production (by Mr. Nugent Monck at the Maddermarket) of "The Merchant of Venice," with my friend and your accredited critic, Mr. Francis Birrell. In the scene where the speech occurs, Portia sat down in a business-like way at a desk, her back largely towards the audience, and when Shylock said, "On what compulsion must I? Tell me that," she simply turned her head and flung straight at him, in a tone of reasonable reproof, "The quality of mercy . . .", &c.: Mr. Birrell and I agreed that the effect was terrific, far greater than if Portia had tripped to the footlights and said her anthology piece with the simper of a schoolgirl at a speech day, or with all the disgusting "technique" acquired at schools of acting and elocution. It lived; it meant something.

When Kappa says he "has always understood," I must suppose he means from authorities. Well, Mr. Poel also is an authority. What Kappa says about actors is, in the main, true, but most people's idea of "conversational utterance" is preferable to what they conceive to be "high and impassioned." Let us suppose that when Shakespeare said "trippingly on the tongue," he meant it; and for Heaven's sake let us throw off the dregs of the Irving-Benson tradition, and gratefully accept what people like Mr. Poel and Mr. Monck have to give us.—Yours, &c.,

BONAMY DOBRÉE.

[“Kappa” replies to this letter under “Life and Politics.”—ED., NATION.]

BIRTH CONTROL AND THE BIRTH-RATE

SIR,—I have been following from week to week in your columns the adumbration by various of your correspondents of their faith in the magic of Birth Control. I myself agree that my baby has a right to be wanted, whether it is a high-born or a low-born babe. I will also agree that many women who would like to bear children must be restrained from doing so by medical advice. But I have never seen any convincing evidence that Birth Control can be used as a sociological panacea. Several of your correspondents mention rises and falls of population. Not even Mr. Cox appears to be acquainted with the studies on population growth made by Pearl and Reed in this country, though they were, not so long ago, the subject of a presidential address to the Royal Statistical Society. In "The Biology of Population Growth" (1925), Pearl has shown how closely the population of any country for which statistics are available follows the logistic curve. He shows, too, that the Algerian population wherein birth control must be almost unknown follows the same curve, or, in other words, obeys the same laws of growth as do populations in which Birth Control is rampant.

It is quite possible that contraception may replace other elements in the complicated machinery which grinds the population to its due logistic level. More Birth Control probably means less abortions and a lower infantile mortality, but there is no evidence to show that it means a smaller population. The evidence points the other way.—Yours, &c.,

J. ROSSLYN EARP.

Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

August 15th, 1927.

MYSTICISM IN POETRY

SIR,—I wonder if you will allow me through the hospitality of your columns to protest against the threatened abuse and misuse of the words "mystic," "mysticism." To-day the word "romance" is coming to mean "successful business venture"; "awfully" means "very"; "silly" means "foolish" (it used to mean "holy"). My own surname means "cheat" (it used to mean a kind of "pilgrim" or "wandering saint"), and now the words "mystic," "mysticism" are falling into the same morass. I have just picked up one of the sixpenny Benn books of Augustan poetry, No. 6 (Rose Macaulay) of the *second series*, and there find that Rose Macaulay's poetry is defined as "tender mysticism," "true mysticism." The perpetrator of this strange outrage is Humbert Wolfe, the new editor. Personally, I think it is better to be a dead lion than a live dog. Personally, I think the critic's calling should be kept clean and sacred, that it is better to be a bold critic than a timid poet, and so, at the risk of seriously offending Humbert Wolfe and his many friends, I would like to say that such word-twisting is unscholarly and unholly. Staring down the corridors of Time for true mystics, I am confronted by Jesus Christ, Buddha, William Blake, Francis of Assisi, Swedenborg; and then, trying to apply what I discover in them to Rose Macaulay, I entirely fail. Moreover, any expression of mysticism seems to contain some sort of Revelation of Hope; but I find in Rose Macaulay's poetry little save a Revelation of Despair. Her poem "The Door" is a very skilful expression of war neurosis, while her poem "The Losers" seems to offer a Greek hell of attenuation to perhaps 99 per cent. of the human race. I read it with a shudder, though here is a stanza with a grim laugh in it:—

"But, as they slouch on drowsily,
They shall quiet joys find—
Boots without heels, jars without jam,
And gnawed cheese-rind,
And pilchard-tins, with one or two
Fish-tails left behind."

Another poem, called "Missionaries," ends thus:—
"And as we drag God's wide blue cup for those his souls that perish there,
In the fierce sun's unflickering stare our own souls shrivel and parch up.
The red moon, like a devil's eye, breasts the dim tide to mock our sleep;
To God beyond the unanswering deep, to Christ our God,
'How long?' we cry."

I find in Rose Macaulay's poetry something that reminds me of Baudelaire and Poe; so that if these were poets of

"true mysticism," "tender mysticism" no doubt I have made a mistake about it all. But God preserve me from such "tender mysticism." Rather would I define her poetry as that of ennui and (quoting Poe) "mystery and imagination," with a few intervals of natural tenderness and profound but melancholy brooding. I would not disparage Rose Macaulay's poetry, for it has great qualities, but as yet it is too experimental and unformed, and therefore has no right to appear in a Benn white booklet.

Reverting to Humbert Wolfe, not only is his criticism frequently unsound, but his poetry, as soon as he touches philosophy, tends to become equally untruthful. His last book, "Requiem," is full of danger-signals and comfortable heresies, like this:—

and sin

that is no more than beauty's other side."

Or this:—

"and woman

so named when she redeemed the fallen sun
with the vicarious silver of the moon."

Or this:—

"And greatness is the vision, not the deed."

Or this:—

"and you understood

how men are only frightened angels, Joan."

Or this:—

"and with a tune

turned the dull North of hatreds into a South full of love."

Moreover (from several other contexts), Michael is not "of Heil." He is the patron angel of spiritual soldiers, not of carnal ones.

Perhaps the strangest and most perverse thing of all is where Humbert Wolfe tells Mary Magdalene in Heaven to anoint the harlot's head (any harlot's) rather than Christ's, and then leaves the stanza unqualified:—

"You, Magdalene,

rather this head anoint with spikenard
than His, that all the oil of the world could not wean
from that which lay before Him, and though 'twere hard
to leave Him, think

She also has a bitter cup—your cup—to drink."

The book contains three or four really beautiful, almost perfect, poems. It contains a score of exquisite stanzas, and both natural and artificial magic; but it also contains some formidable perversions, even disgraceful lies, and any amount of inflated English and cloudy nonsense.

Let us watch and pray (if our disgust will allow us) and neither pervert truth nor sinfully log-roll.—Yours, &c.,
St. Albans.

HERBERT E. PALMER.

THE NATIONAL BOOK COUNCIL

SIR,—Will you allow me to call the attention of people who write, and of people who read, to the very excellent bibliographies now being issued by the National Book Council?

Each deals with a particular subject, and already a large space of ground has been covered. The bibliographies vary in extent (in one, recently distributed, concerning India, information regarding over three hundred books is given), and the saving of time to anybody with special interests may be imagined. The public can receive the lists as they come out by becoming associates on payment of five shillings a year.

I am permitted to add that any additional information will be furnished by the Organizing Secretary of the Council, at 30, Little Russell Street, W.C.1.—Yours, &c.,

W. B. MAXWELL,

Chairman of the Incorporated Society of
London, S.W. Authors, Playwrights, and Composers.

THOMAS PAINE

SIR,—May I thank Mr. Leonard Woolf for his fine tribute to Thomas Paine in your issue of August 13th? I wish, however, he had not depreciated Dr. Moncure Conway's "Life" of the "filthy little Atheist." In my judgment, it is one of the most adequate biographies yet written. Mr. Woolf is incorrect in stating that "nobody now reads" Paine's "three famous books." One of our best-sellers is still the immortal "Age of Reason."—Yours, &c.,

CHARLES A. WATTS,
Rationalist Press Association, Ltd.

PLATO IN PALESTINE

BY LOUIS GOLDING.

IN the dining-hall of the Jewish colony of Ain Charod in Esdraelon, under the hills of Gilboa, there is a collection of the world's vastest tea-pots. Each of them seems to be as spacious as that monstrous baroque dome with which they have capped the motley Sicilian-Gothic glories of the Cathedral at Palermo. The tea-pots at Ain Charod are, however, more appropriate to the surrounding architecture, and the throats of the colonists are adequate to them. When the last mouthful of tea had been drained through the last cube of sugar the colonists, and I amongst them, arose to wander among the groves of the colony in the cool of the evening.

A spectacled scholar who came from Galicia took me in hand and explained the workings of a *kvutzah*. "A *kvutzah*," said he, "is a co-operative farm, where the members work and live as a single unit, all domestic and agricultural labours being conducted under a unified administration." But I confess that it was the human drama rather than the technical workings of Ain Charod that enthralled me. The members of these communal groups for the most part emanate from Eastern Europe, where the conditions they have lived under for the last few centuries predispose them the more readily to these radical experiments in practical and domestic polities. A Rhenish or an English Jew finding that he had smoked his day's ration of cigarettes, would have felt more discomfort in the thought that he might not smoke another unless he were prepared to go over to the store-house and take out a mortgage on his to-morrow's ration. But to my spectacled Galician guide it did not seem embarrassing. And it had not troubled him earlier in the evening to go over to that particular nursery where the children between two and three years old are housed, and demand his ration of one hour to be spent in the company of his baby.

I do not wish to suggest that a tabulated schedule of periods is handed over to children and parents, determining how much time they should spend with each other. But in practice it amounts to much the same thing. For the parents are hard at work all day long, and the places and times of their meals do not coincide. There is no doubt that the food prepared for the children is wholesomer and pleasanter than the confections which the ordinary harassed working mother can serve them. There is no doubt also that the children and parents enjoy only the best of each other. The parents are a gracious anticipation to the children, the children a fragrant fact to the parents. In a more normal organization, which faced itself with such a quantity of hard work, how easily might the parents be querulous tyrants, the children querulous nuisances.

This evening my Galician student had had no more time than to spend half an hour in his child's nursery. The next evening he saw his way clear to finishing his work an hour or two before the evening meal. He would stalk over to the nursery like a conqueror, assume his child from her companions, and carry her crowing and squealing to his own hut, among the barracks of the married people. Two whole hours perhaps. The mother would prepare the tin bath, the father would prepare the fur cap. The mother would fill nose and eyes with soap-suds. The father would make up for it by growling like a bear. The child, naked and rosy, would sing snatches from a Hebrew nursery rhyme. There would be tale-telling, clapping of hands, crooning of songs. The last syllables would falter on the child's lips, the fir-cone she played with drop from her hands. The bear would place the small white-clad creature over his

rough shoulder and thread the cypresses and casuarinas on his way back to the nursery. He would tread gently among the laden cots to the empty one. He would lift aside the mosquito-net and deposit his frail burden on the white moon-gleaming sheet. He would draw down the net again and tiptoe to the door of the nursery, the gentlest-footed bear in all Palestine.

That might be to-morrow. Two whole hours perhaps. No more time to-day than for a half-hour. The nurses in the nurseries must be left to it to look after the children. We that were chemists of note in Galicia have the cowsheds to clean in Ain Charod, the shoes to cobble, the wheat to cut down and bind into stooks. But in the colony there is work to do even for the small children, even for the oldest of the grandparents. The children have their plots to tend, their own meals to wash up in their turn. They devote themselves to their tasks with the delightful sobriety of childhood, so that it is not possible to distinguish whether they find play or work more enchanting. The grandparents are less elastic. It is not so easy for them to find a niche for themselves in a polity so entirely unlike the life that has bent and gnarled them for three-score years and more. They sit outside their hut in the evening, dumb and incredulous with happiness. They recall their own childhood in the Eastern ghettos. It seems hardly possible that these bronzed men and women are their own children. They sit at the benches in front of their hut, and talk in low tones, or do not talk at all, but sit there, marvelling. But these grandchildren are surely not of their line? Are they Jews, even? Is there not something almost Gentile, almost impious, in such clear eyes and sun-burnished hair? They potter off in the morning to the tasks they have forged for themselves with their feeble fingers. Old Reb Pinchas makes small boxes when he can pick up enough odd chips of wood. There is nothing much to be done with them, nothing at all, I believe. None the less, he has a secret dump of small boxes, which increases steadily. Some day there will be a use for them. He will be declared the colony's benefactor, the most clear-sighted of them all, that triumphant day when the paramount necessity of small boxes is at length declared. Mimma Rochel cleans spoons. She has not much use for forks and knives, but a tarnished spoon excites her feverishly. She does not labour upon sabbaths and holy days; and she has added to these the birthday of His Majesty, King George of England. It is not known how she keeps in touch with that anniversary, and what complex of emotions and events has so sanctified it for her. But she has added it to the sabbaths and the holidays. During all the other days in the year, Mimma Rochel cleans spoons.

I cannot decide which group more thrilled me, that evening at Ain Charod, the old people sitting outside their hut like a crowd of Abrahams and Sarahs whom the angels of the lord have already visited and dowered with offspring or that other group of the philosophers in the eucalyptus-grove. The group of the ancients was very wistful, but the group of the young people, the philosophers, seemed to me rich in significance and beauty. We came upon them suddenly on our return from the grotto of Gideon's fountain, a place itself so charming that I must pause there a moment. It had not charmed me less to find the waters regulated by a system of pipes and drainage-grids and the well itself protected by a railing; for the whole of this region of colonies, which they call the Nuris tract, is fed from this source. I could not conceive Gideon raising any

objection to its present uses, by which a good farmer can be tested, no less than he tested his good soldiers. I learned with delight of the part played by the grotto in the annual festivities of the Feast of Weeks. It corroborated in me the conviction that had been growing upon me since my arrival in Palestine; that those ceremonies which in the lands of the more genteel diaspora, had inevitably become either self-consciously truculent or dispiritedly sapless, will raise themselves to a vernal vigour again in the soil from which they have been uprooted. It was a phenomenon hardly to be wondered at that Jewish families in Kensington celebrated the pleasant rites of Christmas with a good deal more piety than the Feast of the Harvesting, which has no relation at all to the English calendar. The story is told that a little Jewish maiden from Kensington was untying the presents from the Christmas tree when she turned sweetly round to her parents to ask them if the Christians also celebrated Christmas. But I cannot imagine a little maiden in the procession at Ain Charod asking whether the children of the Arab Cheikhs or the Scottish gendarmes also carry citrons and palms in the procession of the Feast of Weeks. Upon the night of the Rejoicing of the Law (which is the last night of Tabernacles) the lads and maidens went out from the colony to the grotto. Some held the traditional palms in their hands, others held empty pitchers with candles in them, as Gideon bade his three hundred to do on that memorable night when he routed the Midianites in this place. And then they broke the pitchers and lit a bonfire with the candles and cried out the ancient cry: The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!

A memorable night it was, and the hills of Gilboa gave back the cry again. But this later night as we followed the course of the stream coming down from the grotto, we heard no noise at all but the water whispering and the branches of the eucalyptus shaking in the misty moonlight. And it was only when we sat down by the small bridge which leads over into the deeper wood, that we became aware that a third sound was added to these, where a group of young people were gathered together in a small clearing beyond the bank. The moonlight striking through the branches diapered them curiously with light and shade and they looked more like a flat abstract pattern than a living group. It took some moments to resolve them into a company of young men in black blouses and girls in white frocks gathered about the knees of an older man, whose voice, likewise, did not immediately detach from itself the consonance of leaves and water. He spoke unhurriedly like those, and in Hebrew. Only slowly the drift of his exposition became clear to our friend from Galicia, who thereupon whispered to me what its burden was. He was expounding the Republic of Plato, the correct meaning of justice and injustice, and their reference to practical living not merely in the ideal state of Socrates, but in a community, for instance, like this of Ain Charod.

I do not recall many experiences so beautiful as that group and that moonlit moment, nor any so pregnant with philosophy. It seemed to me that those young folk had transcended both Plato and Lenin; they had tempered the feverish Russian empiricism into a Greek graciousness. They had condensed the mists of Platonic idealism into a concrete and living organism. They were a thousand years ahead of, and a thousand years behind, all contemporary polities. But as between Russia and Athens, they seemed to me nearer to Athens. Who else governed this sodality of theirs but their philosophers? It certainly was not he who had the brawnliest arms, nor he who had most wealth, for none of them had any wealth which did not belong to all. It was not an academic philosophy that ruled their destinies, but a natural wisdom. I could not but recall

Plato's earlier symposium, as I listened to that level voice in the clearing of the eucalyptus wood. This was not Esraelon but Piraeus, whither Socrates had repaired for the festival, with Glaucon, his friend. There was talk of a further festival that same evening, and I could not determine whether the Jewish lads and girls were to carry pitchers with candles in them or the young Greeks were to race on horseback, handing their torches to each other.

"None the less," said Polemarchus, who was born in Prague, "we can go out and watch it after dinner, and many of the young men here will join our party and we shall talk."

So Socrates stayed, and the young people gathered about him. "And what do you consider," asked Socrates, "to be the greatest advantage in the possession of riches?" For they have no possessions in Ain Charod and they do not seem unhappy on that account. And Socrates himself, who was born in Ekaterinoslav, took up the reply. And the language he spoke in was not Greek, but Hebrew, that evening of misty moonlight by Gideon's stream in Esraelon.

A TEN POUND CONUNDRUM

MY married sister has consulted me. That is an event, for she is a woman of strong character and generally professes a low opinion of my intelligence. The reason why she has consulted me instead of her husband will appear hereafter.

On a day not long past she decided to avail herself of a Wednesday cheap return ticket to London for the purpose of shopping. She had a number of small purchases to make, for which, and her expenses generally, her husband presented her at starting with a £10 Bank of England note. She secured an empty carriage, but, a few stations up the line, another woman entered it. To this woman she took an instant and unreasoning dislike. I assume that she was better dressed. They sat in opposite corners of the compartment pretending to be absorbed in the morning papers, and glowering at one another at intervals. At any rate, I am sure my sister glowered, and she says the other woman did.

Then they came to a tunnel and could neither read nor glower, for the carriage was not lighted. When the train emerged from the tunnel a hideous suspicion crossed my sister's mind. How easy for that evil and dishonest woman, in the darkness and the noise of the tunnel, to have robbed her hand-bag, which she had foolishly placed on the seat beside her. She picked up the bag and opened it. The ten-pound note was not there. Of course, anybody could recognize a Bank of England note by feeling it, and of course her ten-pound note was reposing in the other woman's bag.

My sister felt no doubts. She never feels doubts; she has an instinct which guides her surely, especially in the matter of rogues. Her one thought was to recover the note, and she decided, on arrival at the London terminus, to follow the woman and hand her over to the police. Of course, the woman would try to slip away in the crowd, but, my sister reflected, she would have her work cut out to avoid her. Already she savoured her revenge.

All the same, it was annoying, for her day's shopping was spoiled. She had a return ticket and a little change—not much more than enough to pay for her luncheon and her bus fares. However, she would be rewarded by the feeling that she was performing a public duty in consigning this criminal to gaol. She glanced at her with savage anticipation, and observed that she had dropped her newspaper and closed her eyes and appeared to be asleep. Probably she was shamming; if not, she was the most hardened of criminals.

After a while the woman showed unmistakable signs

of being really asleep. She began to snore slightly, and even a criminal woman—well dressed—would not willingly be heard snoring. She was certainly asleep. And as certainly she had the ten-pound note—probably in the bag on her knee.

Very gently my sister approached her; she leaned forward and examined the catch of the bag. It seemed to be quite a simple one. The sleeper snored gently on; my sister touched the catch; she took the tag by her other hand; the catch yielded easily to her pressure, the bag opened, and just within it lay a Bank of England note. My sister extracted it gently with barely a sound, observed rapidly that it was for £10, closed the bag again, and returned to her seat palpitating but triumphant, and replaced the note in her own bag, which she clutched firmly in her hand for the rest of the journey.

She had her day's shopping before her; but ought she not to denounce the criminal? My sister is no fool, and she reflected that, if she now denounced the woman to the police she could produce no evidence of her story. The woman could simply deny that she had ever had a ten-pound note in her bag: she might even charge my sister as a self-accused robber. No, unless, by some happy chance, her husband had had the sense to take the number of the note, she had no evidence, for she had not thought of taking it herself. In short, she had no case. The woman must go scot free. However, she would have a nasty shock when she found her ill-gotten gains had left her, and she would have some uneasy hours wondering whether the police were on her track. My sister decided to be content with that, and to leave her to her own conscience.

Not till the train pulled up in London did the sleeper awake. My sister lingered in the hope that she might open her bag and discover her loss; but, on the contrary, she jumped up hastily and, without waiting to powder her nose or arrange her slightly dishevelled hair, she made off with all haste. "Just so," my sister chuckled to herself, and went off on a leisurely day's shopping.

She returned home in the evening, tired, but well pleased with herself and her purchases. In the hall she met her husband.

"Well, how did you manage?" he asked.

"Very well, thanks," she replied; then, seeing that her husband looked puzzled, she added: "What's the matter?"

"Did you do your shopping?" he asked.

"Yes, of course, why?"

"But you left the note I gave you on the dining-room mantelpiece. I have been wondering, ever since I found it, what you would do."

My sister—who never makes a mistake—denied emphatically having done anything so foolish; but she broke down under cross-examination and told her tale.

Her husband listened intently without a sound until she concluded, "What am I to do?" Then he rocked and roared with laughter, and he does nothing but rock and roar with laughter whenever the subject is mentioned.

So, in despair, my sister, who is the soul of honesty, came to me.

I advised her to advertise in the Agony Column of the *Times* for the lady who dropped a ten-pound note in such-and-such a train, &c.

"Don't be a fool," she replied. "She probably knows the number of the note, and I don't. How am I to explain that I cannot return her the note I picked up? And if she does not know the number, how am I to know she is the right woman?"

"Arrange to meet her and make restitution," said I. "You would know her again?"

"Of course I should know her again," said my sister, "but I would not meet her for all in the world."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because," said my sister, "I should know that she knew that I was lying."

"Then tell the truth," said I, "after all, it was a natural mistake."

"You idiot!" she replied.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

THE performance of a new play of Barrie's is always a notable event, even though it has been in the cupboard since 1915, and is a little antedated in its sentiment. "Barbara's Wedding," which now precedes Strindberg's "The Father" at the Savoy, is rather an obscure trifle. It concerns the imaginings of an ancient Colonel, some of which are enacted before him. But obscurity from Sir James is always enlivened by grace of writing, and though we may not have known quite clearly why we were drying the starting tear, we certainly found it necessary to do so, an irritating and rather humiliating business for a dramatic critic. Mr. Robert Loraine gave a remarkably fine performance of doddering senility. All the cast was good, and the play was produced in a charming setting. Of "The Father," which follows, we need only say that the production has lost none of its high interest since its transfer from the Everyman Theatre.

* * *

No less notable is the production of a new play by Mr. Miles Malleson. This took place last week at the Royalty Theatre, being a farcical adaptation called "Love at Second Sight." Mr. Malleson has so firm a grip on the playwright's technique and writes so pleasantly that he could not fail to provide good entertainment. The story is of no great matter, but he has provided Mr. Dennis Eadie with far better material than he usually obtains. What a good actor he is and how he seems to make his fellow players "jump to it" when he tries. I do not mean that Miss Phyllis Titmuss is not a good actress, but she will be a better one before she leaves Mr. Eadie, who, I seem to remember, had a good deal to do with the early stage development of Miss Gladys Cooper. "Love at Second Sight" is a most cheery little play which should have a long run.

* * *

"The One-Eyed Herring" at Wyndham's has not made up its mind whether to be a rattling farce or a tense detective drama. Thus we lose the thrill of the corpse, but cannot sit comfortably to enjoy Miss Connie Ediss's delightful goings on as Mrs. Pazzi, the canned-herring-cocktail queen, tiara and all. Though the murder we are led to expect occurs in the dark, it happens at such a farcical moment, when everybody seems engaged in stealing everybody else's belongings, that we are deprived of the horror or the thrill. In vain the body falls over the balcony, smashing the bannisters with a horrid crash, on to the convenient couch beneath. It may have been Sir Frank Popham Young's intention to make a super-mystery play, and if the way to do it is to have lots and lots of cues, and none of them tied on to anything at all, he has succeeded, and pulled our legs into the bargain. In spite of the brilliant acting of Mr. Henry Hewitt (why does this actor so seldom get parts equal to his talents?), the fascination of Miss Ediss, and the excellent comedy of Mr. Clive Currie, one feels that the technique of this play is much more adapted to the cinematograph than to the stage.

* * *

The two plays produced last week at the "Q" Theatre, written by two notable authors, Mr. C. E. Lawrence and Lord Dunsany, were both spoilt by their prolixity. Mr. Lawrence's interesting little play "The Year" would have been twice as effective had it been half as long. Lord Dunsany in "Mr. Faithful" has captured a great farcical idea (the ex-officer who answers an advertisement for a good watch-dog). But he so over-writes it that he almost overlays that admirable actor Lyoneh Watts, a valuable loan now recovered from another continent.

* * *

Stanley Houghton's "Hindie Wakes" is deservedly establishing itself among the company of Mr. Shaw's and Ibsen's plays, as one of the most popular of our modern classics; and, if the play is still running next week, no one should miss the chance of seeing the excellent production at the Everyman, with Mr. Henry Lomas in the part of Nathaniel Jeffcote, and Miss Mary Grew in the part of

Fanny Hawthorn. It is a proof of the quality of the play that it wears so well despite the extensive changes that have taken place in the background of Lancashire life. Our Nathaniel Jeffcotes are less sure of themselves to-day; and what Lancashire girl could declare in 1927 so reassuringly that she would always be able to keep herself "so long as there are looms in Lancashire"? All the parts at the Everyman are excellently acted.

* * *

"Up with the Lark," the new musical comedy, by Douglas Furber and Hartley Carrick, which is now running at the Adelphi, is so typical of its kind that *new* seems hardly an appropriate word, especially as we are told that it originated from the French farce "Le Zebre." Mr. Allen Kearns, who plays Freddy van Bozer of New York, has an attractive personality and, in co-operation with Mr. Austin Melford (Jack Murray of London), succeeded by humour (which, by the way, was not always as pleasing as its vivacity) and terrific energy in keeping the audience rocking with laughter. Miss Anita Elson as Toto was gay and elfish; Mr. Leslie Sarony assisted with some clever dancing, and the Tiller girls, whose rhythm was excellent, met with well-deserved applause. The *décor* was so bright and sunny that one imagined a glimpse of our missing summer.

* * *

Mr. Buster Keaton has made another excellent film in "College" (at the New Gallery Cinema). The material is rather feeble and not very original (Mr. Harold Lloyd has already made a film on a very similar theme), and in this respect it falls far short of, for instance, "The General." Mr. Keaton takes the part of a young man who is spurned by his sweetheart because he is a scholar rather than an athlete, and who accordingly makes up his mind to excel in athletics and so win back her affections. His efforts at one branch of sport after another are sometimes almost too pathetic to be laughable, as is his treatment at the hands of his fellow-students. In the end, however, he becomes, by a fluke, "cox" of his college boat, and pilots it to victory in a highly unconventional manner (after which, of course, and after also rescuing his lady from the hands of a wicked athlete, he is able to marry her). Yet, after all, this is no more foolish than some of Charlie Chaplin's material, and I am inclined to think that after him, the first and greatest film comedian, Buster Keaton is a good second. He has great personal charm, and is certainly an artist in significance and subtlety of gesture.

* * *

Things to see and hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, September 3rd.—

Liverpool Repertory Théâtre Season opens with "The Barber and the Cow," by D. T. Davies, and "Two Gentlemen of Soho," by A. P. Herbert.

Birmingham Repertory Theatre: "Bird in Hand."

Sunday, September 4th.—

Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe on "Can We Believe in Progress?" South Place, '11.

Monday, September 5th.—

Marble Arch Pavilion: film, "The Somme."

Wednesday, September 7th.—

Shaftesbury: "The High Road," by Mr. Frederick Lonsdale.

Thursday, September 8th.—

Palace: "The Girl Friend." OMICRON.

SACCO AND VANZETTI (THE NIGHT AFTER)

SLEEP on, sleep well at last;
The seven years' agony is past:
The guilty with the innocent
Rest, are all content.
Only our heads uneasy lie
(The god in us being slow to die);
Only, somewhere, a stone is hurled,
And something gives a startled cry . . .
The Conscience of the World.

V. H. FRIEDLAENDER.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

THE HEART AND NOT THE BRAIN

THE case of Longfellow is a curious one and not unworthy the attention of the literary critic. He was born in 1807 and died, aged seventy-five, in 1882. It was not until 1839, when he was already thirty-two, that he came seriously before the public as a poet with his "Voices of the Night." He was immediately recognized in America as the real thing, and four editions were sold in the first year. From that moment he never looked back. He was accepted as a great poet and America's greatest poet not only in his native land, but wherever people had reached the level of civilization at which poetry is considered of some importance. His popularity was enormous, and his books sold as nowadays only the best-selling novel. And it was not alone the ordinary man who mistook Longfellow for a poet. It is true that the most intelligent and the most critical rejected him at once, for instance, Poe and Margaret Fuller among his fellow-countrymen. But the voices raised against the fame of Longfellow were voices crying solitary in the wilderness. He was accepted as being in the same rank as Tennyson, and, when he visited England in 1867, he was summoned to Windsor, had breakfast with Gladstone, spent a day at Farringford with Tennyson himself (who as usual read "Maud" aloud to him), and another day with Dickens at Gadshill.

* * *

To his contemporaries Longfellow was uncontestedly a great man. He stood with Shelley and Keats and Wordsworth, with Tennyson and Browning, above Emerson and Whitman. He lived like a great man, looked like a great man, and dressed like a great man. In the gallery of Mrs. Cameron's photographs, he need not fear comparison even with Tennyson, for he has the same poetic hallmark of ineffable, if suffering, nobility. And yet, if any critical judgment can be certain, it is certain that Longfellow was no poet at all, that he had less poetry in him than Felicia Hemans or Martin Tupper. He was one of the finest examples of the complete poetic fake known to the history of literature. He is therefore an interesting phenomenon, and one would like to know something of his life, and in particular of the inner life of his mind from which he spun that vast cocoon of verse which stood to poetry as do the products of Courtaulds, Limited, to the product of the silkworm. I hoped that some light would be thrown on him by "A Victorian American, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow," by Herbert S. Gorman (Cassell, 15s.), a large, detailed, and obviously serious biography. Mr. Gorman has written a disappointing book. He gives one the facts of Longfellow's life, which patience or a sense of duty will enable one to master. But he leaves one after 350 remarkably solid pages without any definite idea of what Longfellow was really like or what went on in his mind. Mr. Strachey has been the ruin of Mr. Gorman's biographical style and method. The formula of "Queen Victoria" is strictly adhered to down to the final death scene with its procession of images, and Mr. Gorman is for ever "imagining" what Longfellow "must" have thought or felt at various times during his life, but the figure of the poet which he leaves on our hands is a dummy and the character an X-ray photograph.

* * *

Having read Mr. Gorman without much enlightenment, I turned to "The Golden Day," by Lewis Mumford (Oxford University Press, and Milford, 10s. 6d.). I did so because

the book has as its sub-title "A Study in American Experience and Culture." It is a clever book, but was no help to me because it only once mentions Longfellow, and that casually. Mr. Mumford has a theory about Puritanism and pioneering and their relation to the development of American culture. He deals at length with Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Melville, the Jameses, and some more modern writers, but of Longfellow there is no word. This seems to me wrong. You can no more understand American culture of the nineteenth century without explaining Longfellow's position than you can that of Victorian culture in England without explaining Tennyson.

* * *

Mr. Mumford having failed me, I did the only thing left to me: I turned to Longfellow himself. It is significant that I could buy a complete edition of this poet in a country town in which there is no real bookshop. You would not find Emerson there or Thoreau or Whitman or Melville or Henry James. But you find the complete works of the author of "The Building of the Ship." Mr. Gorman, who, of course, treats Longfellow *pour rire* and not as a poet, says of "The Building of the Ship" that "it is a dramatic and finely conceived work," and that it is "simple and direct and rising to an extraordinary climax that loses nothing but rather gains by the didactic implications." I read "The Building of the Ship," though I had read it before. I can find no line of poetry in it. It is bathos written in doggerel:—

"The prayer is said,
The service read,
The joyous bridegroom bows his head."

And the end of the "extraordinary climax" is:—

"Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee;
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee,—are all with thee."

Yet there is nothing better in Longfellow than "The Building of the Ship"; he was a writer of bathos in doggerel, which both he and his contemporaries genuinely mistook for great poetry. What was the explanation of this mistake? The explanation is, I think, to be found in a comparison of Longfellow with Tennyson and in two of Longfellow's lines:—

"It is the heart and not the brain
That to the highest doth attain."

The British and American contemporaries of the two poets believed that the heart really could attain to the highest, and among other things to the highest in poetry. "Be good, sweet maid," Longfellow might have said; "only be good enough, and you'll be a greater poet than Sappho." That was the recipe on which Longfellow himself wrote "Evangeline," and all his other poems. Now there was something of Longfellow and his recipe in Tennyson, who could write:—

"Oh! teach the orphan-boy to read,
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew. . . ."

But Tennyson happened, in his own despite, to be an artist and a poet, and so, though Longfellow never wrote a line of poetry, Tennyson, when he forgot to be good, wrote such lines as:—

"Summers of the snakeless meadow,
unlaborious earth and earless sea."

LEONARD WOOLF.

REVIEWS

MALLORY OF EVEREST

George Leigh Mallory: a Memoir. By DAVID PYE. (Oxford University Press. 10s. 6d.)

Nobody knew George Mallory who had not climbed with him: climbing was his life, and everything outside was, however he tried to disguise it, either directed towards climbing or put semi-mystically in terms of climbing, or if it could not be so directed or transformed was a continual if unsuspected source of irritation to him.

Climbing is notoriously impossible to write about because one doesn't climb in literary terms, but Mr. David Pye who knew Mallory well, and recognized the impossibility of his task before he began it, has been at least able to convey that Mallory was an outstanding beautiful character and an outstandingly beautiful climber, each because of the other. That it was almost irrelevant that he had a long reach, an acrobat's balance, extraordinary quick reactions to danger, and a fine eye for planning routes up a mountain from the valley below. And that at times something strange and wild came over him that enabled him to make ascents that were, to any other eye, ridiculous even to contemplate. There is an entry in a Climbers' log-book of the Snowdon region. "Mallory's Pipe: this climb is impossible. It has been performed, once, by G. L. Mallory."

The impulse to climb was at first indistinguishable in the boy from a general desire for dangerous freedom, which showed itself not only in roof and cliff-climbing, but in, for example, deliberately, at the age of seven, marooning himself on a rock in a rough sea, and, at twelve, running away from school, not because he was unhappy but to oblige a friend. Later came the specialization: climbing was inevitable because such alternatives as hunting, yachting, flying, and big-game shooting are limited in their freedom by their apparatus, as climbing is not. Mallory's desire to do without the oxygen apparatus on Mount Everest is most understandable.

Now, this impulse to danger was always qualified by a certain high seriousness. When he ran away from school he had taken his mathematical books with him in a neat parcel. And later, when he was not inventing or performing new ascents in the Alps or elsewhere, he felt it necessary to find some intellectual justification for climbing. The fact is, however, that real climbing cannot be practically justified on such grounds as geographical research, or a quest of perfect physical fitness (which can be got far more easily by field-sports), or a morbid love of mountain scenery. He knew that well enough and so made the mistake of trying to justify what is pure natural activity as a civilized art, making a romantic analogy with music:—

"A day well spent in the Alps is like some great symphony. Andante, andantissimo sometimes, is the first movement—the grim, sickening plod up the moraine. But how forgotten when the blue light of dawn flickers over the hard clean snow. The new *motif* is ushered in, as it were, very gently on the lesser wind instruments, hautboys and flutes, remote but melodious and infinitely hopeful, caught by the violins in the growing light . . ."

And so on.

He was by profession a schoolmaster, not a successful one. He had hoped that teaching could be put in terms of climbing—lofty aspiration, the guide, the rope linking the climbers, make a perfect analogy—but he tried, as he later confessed, an impracticable route up the northern face of one of the greater and bleaker public schools. His pupils had been brought up to respond only to regimentation and refused to accept the real freedom that he offered them: they were ironical about his enthusiasms and, because he played no football, took him for a weakling. His only friends among the boys—in my time at least—were rebels, from forms not his own, who recognized that he also did not belong to the system. They climbed with him in the vacations and kept quiet about it. He decided to resign at last, and to "address himself to minds more capable of response." Soon afterwards he was invited to join the first

Everest Expedition. He was already married, with three children, so he and his wife, a true climber like himself, justified the climb personally with the better appointment that his Everest reputation would be likely to bring him. What happened then was that, after the reconnaissance in 1921 and the first nearly successful attempt in 1922, he had won both the reputation and the appointment (at Cambridge), and so they honourably decided that he must not go again. But then it proved that his experience was necessary for the third expedition, in 1924, if it was to have any hope of success, and they judged this sufficient justification again for what both of them, as climbers, really wanted for him. So he went, and it fell to him and a young climber, Irvine, to make the final assault from a camp at 26,800 feet. They were last seen only eight hundred feet from the summit, with an easy slope before them, but very much behind their scheduled time. It was Mallory's fifth attempt and his last chance, before the monsoon, of defeating the highest, grandest, and most treacherous mountain in the world. He was thirty-eight and at the peak of his powers as a climber.

The margin of safety was too small; eight hundred feet on Everest was equal to four times that distance on any lesser mountain and there was the descent to consider. It would soon be dark. The schoolmaster would have turned back; the climber did not. And though nobody can prove that Mallory and Irvine reached the summit before they died, nobody who ever climbed with Mallory can doubt that he did it and helped Irvine to do it, though the feat did not allow strength or time sufficient for the return.

ROBERT GRAVES.

AN ONLOOKER AND IRELAND

Recollections of the Irish War. By DARRELL FIGGIS. (Benn. 16s.)

Porcelain: the Soul of Ireland. By JOHN MACKAY. (Benn. 10s. 6d.)

DARRELL FIGGIS was an onlooker rather than a player in the game. For his failure to realize this the proportions of his book are ill-balanced. Reading "Recollections of the Irish War" one would imagine that all events in Ireland from 1916 till the Treaty in 1921 centred in him. He was consulted by the leaders about this, he says, sent for about that, written to urgently about the third. The December Election, 1918, blew a cold wind, however, and there was no mistake as to the quarter from which it was coming. Figgis says:—

"It would be idle to pretend that I did not feel chagrin at being passed over so completely. Our mortal flesh is not so made; and even Arthur Griffith, than whom I never met a man so selfless, might have felt mortified at so public a rebuke."

The comparison is not a happy one. The elimination of Figgis was not a sudden blow struck at a hero, not his devotion repaid with the nation's ingratitude, as has been frequently the case in Ireland, but the ultimate wearing off of a confidence in him, partly placed in him by circumstances, but a confidence that had never been wholly given.

Though at one moment Figgis admits that he never came to the true source of political action in Ireland, since he was never a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, at all others he regards himself as a chronicler of authority. "I am telling the history of these times as they gathered about the experience of an individual, looking at events framed through the windows of an actual house." But the window through which he looked at events was blurred and fogged, and it was often fogged by his own breath. In the story he tells of Ireland the personal note he sounded was made into a nation's war-cry. The book is closed with a final triumphant gesture as Figgis's life is saved from a half-drunken officer. Two pages at the conclusion of the book deal with the Black and Tan campaign and the Treaty. Six pages, immediately before, dwell on the hanging episode and subsequent rescue of Figgis. But as a book, apart from political value, it has sound qualities. Such are insight of character, and a capability of seizing the philosophical meaning of the event. Writing of the planned assassination of Lord French, that

assassination which failed, he shows his knowledge of Celtic reaction to such occurrences:

"The reality of success might have brought revulsion, where the lack of fatality left the exploit decked with only its splendid adventure."

With insight, too, the leaders of 1916 are described:—

"Sean MacDermott . . . like a flame shining in a slight crystal-like lanthorn of a body. Pearse . . . prepared to cast away his life in the faith that out of the ashes of sacrifice the phoenix of a new Ireland might arise. If it was Tom Clarke who brought the lamp of tradition, and held it firmly without any thought of himself until others were ready to take it from him . . . it was Sean MacDermott who served the organization of revolt that burned in him like a consuming flame; it was Padraic Pearse that gave to insurrection a philosophy that was also a religion. James Connolly, the master intellect of them all . . . his Northern accent conveyed the thought of a realist that lived to slay illusions and Ceannt who went into insurrection looking for victory because the thought of defeat chafed his intractable spirit."

With darkly true colours the portrait of Casement is painted: his hopes, plans, disappointments, betrayal by Germany, despair. Griffith stands well out in the picture, too, and Cathal Brugha, but Collins is more obscure. One cannot but suspect that shadows had again fallen on the window through which Figgis saw him.

But though the politician in Figgis played his clearness of vision false, the writer remains true. The writer it is who describes Achill, the western island where he lived:—

"The air was filled with sunlight, like a crystal cup filled with golden liquid that brimmed above the lip. . . . Earth in that wild and desolate place was altogether lovely, sunk in deep, reticent peace, and clothed with delicate and exquisite colour."

Again, in Durham gaol, when writing of Beethoven's symphonies:

"Night after night, then, I sought to bring back from the chambers of memory all that they had stored of melody . . . some of the motives most familiar to me would tease the mind, just beyond the margin of recovery, and then flood the brain like the vision of another world. . . . I remember my next cell neighbour asking me what I was doing whistling half the night. He asked more in wonder than vexation. But I whistled more softly thereafter."

Since, by the work of his own hand, it is impossible to look on his book impersonally—the personality of the writer cannot here be separated from the writing—we cannot refrain from quoting the reflection made by Figgis on the deaths of Collins and Boland, an observation that fitted all too aptly his own unhappy end: "Who will not say that Life, with Time for servant, are not master ironists, pitiless in their mockery?"

The author of "Porcelain" has a gentle humour, a gift all too rare in Ireland, although more bitter wit and satire are not wanting. As yet the scheme he is to weave does not stand out very clearly—as he says himself, he is in perpetual turmoil, not knowing what "side" to be on. But it is a pleasant turmoil, like the waters of a swirling stream in summer.

John Mackay is a man who is acquainted with European culture, and it is with the aid of this culture that he draws pictures like the delightful "Father Hilarion," whose interest and significance is not merely local and peasant, but coloured with the tradition of Catholic Europe where the spires of the Church were high.

"So at Val Sainte, Ardeche, la grande Trappe, everywhere, this monk has filled the spaces of his woods with the fragrance of this tree of frankincense. He has set the wild places of his solitude aflame like glowing altars. . . . You step into the forest, its trees close around you, silence is beneath your feet, shadow is the companion of your shoulder."

"Certain days," writes Mr. Mackay in his conclusion, "come for all of us when the going means no return. It is the secret of the heart within the most transient separation. The Irish, whatever faults lay at their door, did not mock good-bye. They wove it through all the music of their history." Here John Mackay sees into the mind of Ireland.

Emphasis by capitals, and sometimes, even, whole words in capitals, weakens style, and here and there throughout this book, Mr. Mackay, having made a statement clearly, obscures it by a repetition.

THRILLERS

No Other Tiger. By A. E. W. MASON. (Hodder & Stoughton. 7s. 6d.)

Tracks in the Snow. By LORD CHARNWOOD. (Benn. 7s. 6d.)

The Canary Murder Case. By S. S. VAN DINE. (Benn. 7s. 6d.)

The Crime. By ANTHONY LANG. (Melrose. 7s. 6d.)

The Feet of Death. By MARGARET PETERSON. (Hutchinson. 6s.)

The Curse of the Reckavilles. By WALTER S. MASTERMAN. (Methuen. 3s. 6d.)

A Flash of Lightning. By SIR JOHN ADYE. (Methuen. 7s. 6d.)

Possessed. By ROSALIE and EDWARD SYNTON. (Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.)

Idle Island. By ETHEL HUESTON. (Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.)

Venturers All. By LORD GORELL. (Murray. 7s. 6d.)

"THRILLERS" are a kind of iron tonic for nervous people. Their efficacy is proved by our gurgles and the depth we snuggle into the armchair. They are largely consumed, in circumstance of great secrecy, by professors and other superior persons. Mr. Mason has given us a first-class "shocker," which has even a dash of poetry in it. The poetry, indeed, is splashed as bravely and carelessly as swaggering soda into a large whisky. Other writers are content to describe their villain as tigerish: Mr. Mason works backward, and his opening scene is a metaphor writ large. Crouching with his gun on a tree platform in a Burmese forest at midnight, Colonel John Strickland awaits the man-eating tiger. Tropical owl and jungle cat, with respective hoot and snarl, announce the coming of their terrible master: and, padding into the moonlit clearing, comes no tiger indeed, but a big, pallid man, "looking like Lucifer on the morrow of his fall." Mr. Mason maintains the enlarged and lavish values, both in criminality and generosity, of all true melodrama. Nothing could be good enough for the lovely Lady Ariadne, so the chivalrous Colonel must needs journey to the original mine to buy her a ruby as large as an egg. No doubt he got it cheaper, but that is an unworthy consideration, for he paid in danger. There is something fine in the fact that the Miltonic villain



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is the unfortunate victim of savage conditions in a French penal settlement. In a serious novel Mr. Mason might have shown in the real tragedy of Archie Clutter how our social system makes criminals; he has been well content to make our spine creep (especially in that fine scene preliminary to the strangling of the dancing-girl) and to make our finger itch for the trigger.

The detective yarn begins where the "thriller" ends—with the chief corpse. Lord Charnwood, with the efficiency and fine clarity of style that give his story real distinction, delivers the murdered man in the first sentence. Real snow with foot-prints in it is rather incredible nowadays, but the story is supposed to take place a generation ago, when the weather was different. Suspicions quickly close in around two persons, a pleasant, but temperamentally uncertain, Irishman and a very respectable Englishman; and deduction is based on genuine characterization. That makes the story a model of its kind. By comparison, "The Canary Murder Case," an American yarn, shows how efficiency can be carried too far. A beautiful actress is found neatly choked on the beautiful davenport in her luxurious apartment. We are given plans of the room, documented footnotes concerning other crimes. The whole affair resembles the up-to-date card system and ingenious files which render modern business unworkable. Besides, Philo Vance, the detective, clips his speech in annoying fashion, and is, in truth, a snob. Readers, however, who attack a detective story as seriously as a crossword puzzle will settle down to this book. The police inspector in "The Crime," by Anthony Lang, has an equally distressing fashion of quoting Dr. Johnson as his friend "Sam," but this story of murder, a double life, and concealed jewels is up to railway carriage standard.

The remaining detective stories on our list are mixed forms—that is to say, extraneous evidence in the shape of mysterious Chinese is brought in or the motive is the exculpation of an innocent person. They do not depend on deduction. The unfortunate woman in "The Feet of Death" did not succumb to a bullet in the neck, and it is obvious that Mollie's brother, even though she shields him, is innocent. But we could not guess that the victim had been wearing a poisoned Chinese slipper—that entails a visit in a taxi to Limehouse. We are equally at the mercy of Mr. Masterman in his story "The Curse of the Reckaviles," for the reason which made the last gloomy lord of that romantic, or rather Gothic, family lay his own corpse at another man's feet involves a far-away marriage in Italy. There are, however, good cross-clues to beguile the reader, and the really atmospheric "curse" vanishes satisfactorily, though absurdly, when the rightful heir and his simple bride-to-be kiss on the last page.

Our satisfaction with circumstantial evidence is decidedly smug, and Sir John Adye makes an excellent case against that particular method of supplying the hangman or the electrician. Roland Amherst, a portrait painter, flung angrily out of Hollenden House into the rain when his vulgar, war-profiteering host accused him of making love to his wretched wife. In a flash of lightning he saw a man passing him. The next morning the artist was arrested for murder. He is only acquitted by last-minute evidence. Years later he meets the real murderer, who is about to marry the woman he himself had lost. That is really another story in itself, and the author, probably realizing that fact too late, allows his villain to crumple suddenly. "Possessed" gives us sobbingly the reason for, rather than the mystery of, a murder. The horrible mother-in-law who tortured her son-in-law and daughter by what appears to be witchcraft expressed in terms of modern amateur psychology should really have been shot with a silver bullet. There is a fine stroke of dramatic irony at the climax which compensates us for a slightly excessive lachrymose note.

Sofas, beds, golf links, and the undergrowth of private woods are the only tolerable places for the disposal of murdered people. Too much sky and seashore purify us of our false terror. The washed-in corpse of "Idle Island," despite an exciting sea climax, hardly disturbs the quiet comedy of an American unspoiled holiday resort with several simple and delightful characters. The second peer on our list gives us a beautiful heroine in "Venturers All," just

out of convent, and a very wicked and weak-minded papa. The mystery is never very exciting, but there are good fist-cuffs in a midnight churchyard—mostly under the belt.

SO THIS IS ENGLAND

About England. By M. V. HUGHES. (Dent. 5s.)

See England First. By S. P. B. MAIS. (Richards. 7s. 6d.)

This England. By EDGAR WALLACE. (Hodder & Stoughton. 7s. 6d.)

ANYONE may rush through Italy or Greece and produce a volume without compunction; but diffidence, or self-consciousness in another form, attacks the writer whose theme is England. Or so it would appear from two of these three books. Mr. Mais devotes a preface to justification and apology because, instead of going to Tahiti, he has stayed at home. The author of "About England" treats the whole country as a curiosity shop displayed to a mixed herd of schoolchildren on condition they respect the owner's idiosyncrasies. This attitude throughout an entire guide-book becomes tiresome. The volume is intended by its author for the use of Americans, Dominions visitors, and English residents ignorant of their country. But tourists can be classified otherwise than by residence. There is the question of individual psychology; of whether or not the reader craves this type of peremptory instruction:—

"At about four o'clock on a summer morning stand on Westminster Bridge and say over Wordsworth's sonnet, beginning, 'Earth has not anything to show more fair. . . .'"

There must, of course, be thousands who prefer to receive an orthodox impression through the medium of print than risk gathering the wrong one or, still worse, none at all. For their benefit it may be said the book is full of painstaking information concerning inns and villages, London and country life, innumerable characteristics and peculiarities. It is a handy volume to carry, and the umbrella-laden visitor, attempting to see the sights of London in a downpour, should be more than cheered to read, of Piccadilly, that "the sun is always shining there, and no one looks worried."

Mr. Mais has little use for generalizations. Having once got over that apologetic preface, he launches with delight into a catalogue of his own enjoyments. In this he is nothing if not human. Pages of it might have been, and perhaps have been, lifted straight from a hurried but triumphant diary. He concentrates on the Southern counties for the good reason that he knows them best; and is there not, he challenges, enough nourishment in one half of England to allay the fierce pangs of *wanderlust*? It is no part of the author's scheme to allure deceptively by means of eloquent description and a polished literary style. (After all, this is not Tahiti, but England, where anyone may run down by the next train and check hyperbole.) The deducible argument is just that Mr. Mais, having had, in common prose, a rattling good time, the average excursionist may reasonably expect the same. But the excursionist is served better than the reader; for the game of retracing walks and expeditions proves so absorbing as to defy, throughout long pages, such minor formalities as a new paragraph. In compensation Mr. Mais fills up the old one with those historical references which every guide must have, at least temporarily, at his finger-tips. As a book it is all too formless and unpruned, but its author's enthusiasm for the country is disarming.

It would be surprising if Mr. Edgar Wallace were to spend time on preliminary explanations. Such a course would involve too great a reduction in his annual output. In the title of this book no John-of-Gauntian solemnity is implied; it merely groups together a collection of brief newspaper articles dealing with people and conditions of the present day. Each of these pleasant journalistic trifles affords a glimpse into a different manner of existence, whether that of taxi-driver, burglar, or policeman. But all are, of necessity, scrappy and superficial. If this is England, it is England potted, and in sample jars. Mr. Bert Thomas has supplied a sketch for each jar to aid preservation.

SYLVA NORMAN.

SCOTTISH CASTLES

The Mediæval Castle in Scotland. By W. MACKAY MACKENZIE. (Methuen. 15s.)

THIS is an uncommonly good book of its type—halfway between the exhaustive, scientific treatise, and the popular handbook. Based on the author's Rhind Lectures in Archaeology, 1925-6, it is erudite and well documented, but never dull. It gives a very clear account of castle-building in Scotland, from the earliest moat-and-bailey examples to the sixteenth century; of the types and principal features of the castles themselves, and of the place they filled in the life of the country. Mr. Mackenzie finds space to develop some new and interesting theories as to castle designs, both in Scotland and in Western Europe as a whole, and he supports his narrative, his descriptions, and his arguments by copious reference to actual examples. There are sixty-nine good illustrations, and nineteen plans or groups of plans in the text. Yet the whole work is comprised within rather under 250 clearly printed pages, and the price of the book is only 15s. It is an astonishing feat of compression, and remarkably good value for money.

Mr. Mackenzie's two chief contributions to the theory of the subject are his formulation of what he calls the "palace plan," developed from the great hall as its central feature, as a special type, and his assault on the accepted theory of the keep. The former involves a very interesting discussion of the use of the term "palace" in Scotland, as applied to buildings that would certainly not be described as palaces elsewhere. The latter leads him into a lively controversy with Sir Charles Oman, Professor Hamilton Thompson, and others.

Mr. Mackenzie's main contention is that the mediæval castle has been considered too exclusively as a military structure, and too little as a dwelling place. In his reaction from this attitude, he seems sometimes to minimize the importance of its purely tactical features. In denying that the keep, or the great tower as he prefers to call it, was deliberately designed with a view to a final stand, he lays great stress on the number of castles that surrendered to the besiegers as soon as the enceinte was pierced; but this argument from event to intention is not wholly convincing. The same thing might be said of many more modern fortifications, with citadels or inner defences that were certainly intended to afford the opportunity of prolonged resistance. The fact that it is possible to disagree with Mr. Mackenzie does not, however, diminish the value, and most certainly does not diminish the interest of his book, which should be in the hands of everyone who cares at all for the subject on either its military, its social, or its architectural side.

BOOKS FOR THE GARDENER

All About Gardening. (Ward Lock. 6s.)

The Beginner's Garden. By MRS. FRANCIS KING. (Scribners. 7s. 6d.)

The Labour-Saving Garden. By FRANK TOWNSEND. (Sidgwick & Jackson. 2s. 6d.)

My Town Garden. By LADY SETON. (Nisbet. 6s.)

Gardening in Town and Suburb. By DOREEN JOAD. (Labour Publishing Co. 2s. 6d.)

NEARLY all of these books are intended for the beginner, and there is not one of them which the beginner will not find useful. "All About Gardening" is the largest and most complete. It is a very detailed manual of gardening, clear, well arranged, and extraordinarily cheap. There is practically no field of horticultural knowledge in which the amateur may require advice and assistance which it does not cover. Its general and special lists of shrubs and plants are more than usually good. Another excellent non-specialized book, which can be safely recommended to the owner of a small garden who works it himself, is Mr. Townsend's. The adjective in his title might well be applied to his book; it would be impossible to get more information into a small book than he does, and here, again, the price is very reasonable. Our only criticism of this class of book is that their writers rarely leave the beaten track of gardeners' lore, even when that track is really inaccurate. For

instance, in treating of hedges, both these books "warn" the beginner that yew is a slow-growing hedge. Nine out of ten gardeners will tell you the same; but as hedges go, a yew hedge, properly treated, is not a slow grower.

Mrs. King's book is also general and for the beginner, who may get many good hints of what to grow from her, though he should remember that Mrs. King is writing mainly about American gardens. The last two books are specially devoted to town and suburb gardening. They are both excellent. Lady Seton writes well about her experiences in Kensington and Hampstead, and her advice is always sound. Miss Joad has packed her little book with useful information, and she is very judicious in the advice which she gives as to the varieties which should be grown.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Europe in the Nineteenth Century (1780-1914). By A. J. GRANT and H. W. V. TEMPERLEY. (Longmans. 12s. 6d.)

This is a very useful handbook of nineteenth-century European history. The publishers claim that the authors "have tried to maintain an international standpoint throughout . . . to write not so much the history of the different countries of Europe as of Europe itself." The claim is justified, and a book of this kind is always welcome, for there are too few of them. The book is necessarily a historical skeleton, but it is a skeleton which will enable any intelligent student to reconstruct about it the living form which the history of Europe assumed during the nineteenth century. This is because, as the authors say in their Preface, "ideas rather than events are the stuff of this history."

Horace Walpole: a Memoir. By AUSTIN DOBSON. Fourth edition revised and enlarged by PAGET TOYNBEE. (Milford. 10s. 6d.)

The third edition of this well-known memoir was published in 1910. Since that date an immense amount of new material, largely due to Mr. and Mrs. Paget Toynbee, has been discovered and published, including a great mass of Walpole correspondence. There are, therefore, very good reasons for revising Dobson's book in the light of this new material, and no one could be better qualified for the work than Mr. Toynbee. He has done his task with care and discrimination, correcting the text where necessary and making many valuable additions both in the text and in notes.

REVIEWS AND MAGAZINES

THE "Contemporary Review" publishes Mr. Augustine Birrell's Valedictory Address to the Liberal Summer School at Cambridge. It is wise to have made this enlightened and charming speech available to a larger audience. Professor Ramsay Muir writes in the same paper on "The Liberal Summer School and the Problems of Industry," in which he sets out the problems which an inquiry into the present condition of British industry would have to attempt to solve.

Mr. George Glasgow in his "Foreign Affairs" ("Contemporary Review") devotes the greater part of his article to an examination of the Recent Naval Limitation Conference. He concludes with these words: "A naval limitation conference which breaks down on the insistence by one delegation of maximum fighting strength and maximum guns when the other two want to reduce both, especially as the one delegation referred to represents the country which suggested the Conference, is a phenomenon which cannot be explained by reason. It is so gross as to suggest the hope that time will chasten the unreason, and that a better experience may be in store on a future occasion." In an article on the same subject in the "Round Table," the failure at Geneva is attributed to the "decline in internationalism since 1919. . . ." The Washington Conference caught the last rays of war-time idealism. The Geneva Conference is the inevitable result of post-war self-centredness. If the two halves of the English-speaking world continue as they are at present it will be very difficult for them to avoid drifting into antagonism and competition. Mr. Hugh Spender writes on the same subject in the "Fortnightly" under the title "The Riddle of the Cruisers."

The "Round Table" publishes an interesting article called "Great and Small States at Geneva," which makes a plea for the fortifying of the diminishing prestige of the

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Assembly—"which is the only League organ in which three-quarters of the League members have a place. . ."—against the growing importance of the Council.

The "Fortnightly Review" contains another of Mr. Robert Crozier Long's able "Letters from Berlin" on "Tariff Reform and Credit Crisis." Colonel Silburn writes in the same paper on "The Flag Crisis in South Africa." Among other articles on foreign affairs, the "Contemporary Review" has "Some Aspects of the Vienna Disorders," by G. E. R. Gedye, and "The Development of China," by Thonald Hollons Holland. There is an article in the "Round Table" on "China Through the Ages."

Dr. Henry Mercer writes in the "Cornhill Magazine" on "India and Education." Professor Fraser-Harris has an article in "Chambers's Journal" on old theories of disease called "Blaming the Air." Both papers have good measure of holiday stories. There is an article in "Scribner's Magazine" on Amy Lowell, and five short tales.

The "Monthly Criterion" contains "A Note on Sir James Frazer," by Frederic Manning; "The Thomistic Synthesis and Intelligence," by the Rev. M. C. D'Arcy, S.J.; a Music Chronicle, by J. B. Trend, and two poems by Stella Gibbons.

INSURANCE NOTES

THE provision which enables a man to spend up to one-sixth of his income on life assurance, and to secure a rebate of income tax on the amount so spent, is brought before our notice on every income-tax form, and might be supposed to be well known. In view of this it is surprising to find that recent official records show that only about one-fiftieth of the national income as estimated by Professor Arthur L. Bowley and Sir Josiah Stamp is devoted to life assurance. The effect of the rebate, which is now allowed at half the standard rate, is that the State pays one-tenth of the annual premium for a policy on the life of the taxpayer, or that of his wife. This is no mean advantage to secure in return for what is, after all, merely the act of saving money, and income-tax payers are strongly recommended to explore the possibility of reducing their payments by this method.

For some time past there has been a noticeable tendency on the part of the life assurance offices, to quote a reduced rate of premium per cent. for large policies of a certain type—presumably on the grounds that it is cheaper to issue and maintain on the books, say, one policy for £1,000 than ten policies of £100 each. It is, of course, a familiar custom in ordinary commercial circles to give some advantage in the price for large quantities, and there appears to be no reason why it should not be put into practice more freely in the life assurance business. Ten policies of £100 each call for ten medical fees, and a proportionate increase in the general expenses associated with the issue and maintenance of a life policy. The saving in respect of a policy for a substantial amount must be appreciable, and it is but right that the policyholder should reap some of the benefit.

It was announced at the last annual meeting of the Yorkshire Insurance Co., Ltd., that it had been decided to reduce the rates of premium for whole-life non-profit assurances of £1,000 and upwards. A leaflet containing the new rates has now been issued, and the reductions at all ages are considerable. We are glad to see this "Yorkshire" prospectus quoting for policies of £1,000. It is our firm conviction that it is bad tactics on the part of the Life Assurance Offices to quote rates of premium for policies of £100 only. This practice is undoubtedly responsible for a great number of policies for trifling sums which, otherwise, might have been much larger. A change in this respect should have a marked effect on the woefully under-insured state of our people.

Those who think of effecting a life policy, or are otherwise interested in life assurance, may like to know of the following offices, all of which are prepared to quote reduced premiums for policies of £1,000 and upwards:—

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While it is believed that this list is complete, there may be other offices which grant policies of £1,000 and over on similar terms. If so, the Editor will be glad to have particulars.

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By CYRIL BURT, M.A., Psychologist, Education Department, London County Council, with a Preface by Sir ROBERT BLAIR, K.B.E., LL.D., formerly Education Officer, London County Council. Third Impression. Pp. xv. + 432. Numerous illustrations. Cloth, 18s.

The second impression of this book was originally issued in 1922, and so great was the demand for copies that the whole edition was soon exhausted. The demand for a third impression has been constant, but the heavy advance in printing charges has hitherto prevented this being accomplished. New methods of reproduction, however, are now available, and the reduction in price to 18s. will undoubtedly bring Dr. Burt's methods before an even wider circle.

Ready October.

The Restoration of European Currencies

By D. T. JACK, M.A., Dept. of Political Economy, University of Glasgow. Demy 8vo. About 230 pp. Cloth, 10s. 6d.

An attempt is made in this book to discuss certain of the methods which have been employed within recent years to reform the disorganized currency systems of Europe. The author, in his Introduction, makes a general survey of the whole problem, and then proceeds to examine the position of each country separately for the sake of simplicity.

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FINANCIAL SECTION

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

LUXURIES—HERRBURGER BROOKS—IMPERIAL TOBACCO—NORTH AMERICAN—TEA.

IT is a gloomy reflection upon the industrial situation in this country that while coal, iron and steel, and engineering shares should remain on the whole neglected, a greyhound racing issue should be promptly oversubscribed. The luxury trades and artificial silk continue to hold the floor. Speculative interest has shifted this week from such luxuries as gramophones and beer to pianos and tobacco. The shares of Herrburger Brooks, the company which makes pianoforte actions, have risen sharply to 65s. We recommended these shares in THE NATION of June 25th at 56s., not on the prospect of any further amalgamations—these have been denied by the Company—but on the ground that the two companies already acquired, which manufacture pianoforte keys, should enable about 40 per cent. to be earned on the increased capital of £250,000. The purchase of these two businesses for £240,000 was financed by the sale of Government securities for £86,667 (out of a total of about £156,000), and the issue of 18,559 shares at 45s. each. The balance of the purchase price is to be spread over a period of years, no payment being made in any year until a 15 per cent. tax free dividend is paid out of net profits. This was the dividend paid in the last two years. The rise in the shares has been rather steep. The present price points to shares being in short supply on the dealers' books.

* * *

The sensational rises on Tuesday in Imperial Tobacco and British Celanese shares may be attributed in each case to a "bear squeeze." British Celanese rose in a few hours from 62s. 6d. to 76s. 3d., and closed the day at 70s. 6d. Seeing that the preference shares of British Celanese had arrears of dividends at February 28th of £1,275,000, some speculators are wise in taking profits on British Celanese and exchanging into some of the lower price artificial silk shares such as Branston Artificial Silk in which popular interest is developing. Branston have a working arrangement with Harbens and their £1 ordinary shares at 15s. 3d. have no appearance of inflation. A revival of interest in Imperial Tobacco shares is probably deserved. The shares stood out as a good purchase when they were marked ex-dividend at 101s. on August 26th. But the buying on Tuesday cropped up on the usual expectation of a bonus, and forced the "bears" to cover at prices up to 107s. There are some undoubted "bull" points. It is said that the Company's heavy expenditure on advertising its new brands of cigarettes and tobacco has resulted in a bigger trade, and, of course, the bonus has not disappeared merely because it was not declared last February. The Company has apparently not taken account (as at October 31st, 1926) of the bonus shares it received from the British-American Tobacco Company. It might do so next October and so write up its investments, add so much to reserve, and apply so much in another bonus distribution. But all this is conjecture, and the difficulty in making conjectures about the policy of Imperial Tobacco lies in the extraordinary number of directors. It is natural that an amalgamation of important companies should lead to a large representation on the board, but thirty-five directors are a big number, and we should imagine that if such an assembly of elderly and wealthy gentlemen came together without an absentee, a decision on the question of the bonus might be postponed indefinitely.

* * *

A 10 per cent. yield on an American public utility stock of high standing sounds too good to be true, but it can be obtained in effect by buying the common stock at £54 of the North American Company. For the last four and a half years this Company has paid no cash dividends, but has issued 2½ per cent. in stock each quarter. Thus by selling the dividend stock each year at the market price a return of 10 per cent. on the market value ruling at the time of sale is obtained. The policy of distributing stock

dividends is followed for the purpose of conserving cash resources to finance the constantly increasing operations of the Company. It has not had the effect of watering the capital. Since April, 1923, when this policy was started, the amount of common stock outstanding has been increased by 84 per cent. by issues for the acquisition of new properties, and by 52 per cent. by stock dividends; but net earnings have increased by 125 per cent. The North American system is, in fact, earning about 8 per cent. on its total capital investment, and the low rate at which its subsidiaries borrow money by the issue of debentures or preferred stock, enables a liberal distribution to be made on its common stock. Hence there is nothing unsound about this 10 per cent. stock dividend. The present capitalization of the North American is \$30,000,000 preferred stock and 4,193,000 common shares of no par value. Its subsidiaries are capitalized at about \$293 million in bonds, \$187 million in preferred stock with minority interests at \$10 million.

* * *

The North American Company, incorporated in 1891 is, in fact, one of the oldest, largest, and most successful public utility companies in the United States. It was started by Henry Villard, a newspaper man who became associated with Edison in the development of electrical light and power in the 'eighties. It now controls about 7 per cent. of the total electrical power generated in the United States, or about two-thirds the total amount generated in England. Its growth has been sound. Some public utility companies have in recent years bought properties at inflated prices in widely separated parts of the country, but nine-tenths of the North American consolidated income is derived from four districts—Cleveland, St. Louis, Milwaukee, and central California—which are growing industrial centres. In the last ten years the gross revenues of North American have risen from \$20,000,000 to \$117,000,000. Its net earnings per common share in 1926 worked out at \$8.85, but it must be remembered that this figure only includes the earnings of subsidiaries in which the Company has a 75 per cent. or greater stock interest. There are in addition the undistributed earnings of subsidiaries in which the Company has an important but not a controlling interest. Allowing for these and for the writing back of certain depreciation, the total earnings of the Company are estimated to amount to about \$6.05 per common share.

* * *

The market in tea shares is notoriously bad. When buying is in progress inflated prices have to be paid, and when selling starts "give-away" prices have to be taken. It is what is called a "one-way" market. Recently it has been all "buyers." The "statistical" position of tea is considered good. Stocks in hand at 187,000,000 lbs. are lower than they have been for some years, and prices have advanced. With a smaller production this year stocks are expected to decline further. Hence the demand for tea shares. Prices already discount a fair increase in dividends. The yields obtainable on most tea shares on the basis of 1926 dividend are relatively meagre. The following table shows some of the best "investment" companies:—

	1926 Div.%	Price.	Yield %
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Amalgamated, £10	...	51½	7 6 0
Jorehaut, £1	...	35	4 4 0
Jokai, £1	...	40	5 16 0
Jhanzie, £1	...	40	5 8 0 0
Ceylon Tea, £1	...	50	6½ 7 14 0

A 10 per cent. yield is none too much to expect from companies engaged in such a speculative industry as tea planting. It will generally pay to go against the tea share market—that is, to sell when the market has been strong for some time, and to buy in the middle of a depression.

